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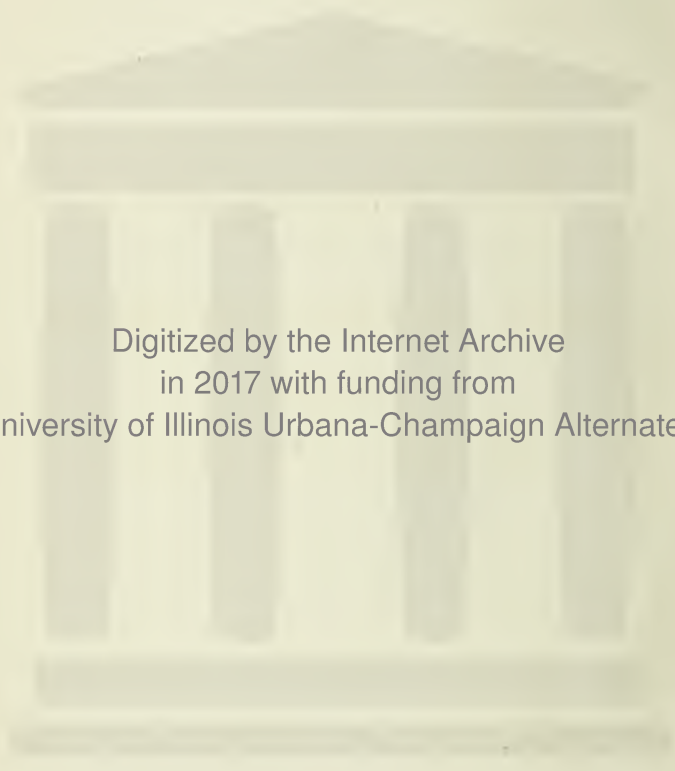
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John N. Freeman.

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THE JEWISH CHURCH.

FROM SAMUEL TO THE CAPTIVITY.

LECTURES
ON THE HISTORY
OF
THE JEWISH CHURCH

PART II.
FROM SAMUEL TO THE CAPTIVITY

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PREFACE.

THIS VOLUME, like that which preceded it, contains the substance of Lectures delivered from the Chair of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Oxford. Whilst still disclaiming, as before, any pretensions to critical or linguistic research, I gladly acknowledge my increased debt to the scholars and divines who have traversed this ground,—Ewald, in his great work on the “History of the People of Israel,” to which I must here add his no less important work on the Prophets; Dean Milman, in his “History of the Jews,” now republished in its completer form; Dr. Pusey’s “Commentary on the Minor Prophets”; the numerous writers on the Old Testament, in Dr. Smith’s “Dictionary of the Bible,”—Mr. Grove especially, to whom I am once more indebted for his careful revision of the text of this volume, and for frequent suggestions of which I have constantly availed myself.¹ Many

¹ For various illustrations of the Persia, from his own personal experiences of the East.

The topography of Jerusalem, which occupies so large a space in this period of the history, demands further notice than I have given to it. But the extreme uncertainty in

thoughts have, doubtless, been confirmed or originated by Mr. Maurice's "Sermons on the Prophets and Kings."

The general principles which have guided the selection of topics, and the general sources from which the materials are drawn, are too similar to those which I have set forth in the Preface to my former volume to need any additional remark.

A few special observations, however, are suggested by the peculiarities of the portion of the history on which we now enter.

1. Although there still remains the same difficulty, which occurs in the earlier period, of distinguishing between the poetical and the historical portions of the narrative, yet the historical element here so far preponderates, and the mass of unquestionably contemporary literature is so far larger, that I have ventured much more freely than before to throw the Lectures into the form of a continuous narrative; believing that thus best the Sacred History would be enabled to speak for itself. There are, doubtless, many passages in which the historical facts and the Oriental figures are too closely interwoven to be at this distance of time easily separated. There are others which bring out more distinctly than in the earlier history the interesting variations between the Hebrew text

which — till further excavations are possible — it is of necessity involved, the City or Temple, beyond such general indications as can be gathered from the ancient descriptions. has withheld me from offering any detailed plan or theory, either of

which is the basis of our modern versions, and that which is represented by the Septuagint. Others again, especially where we have the advantage of comparing the parallel narratives of the Books of Kings and of Chronicles, exhibit diversities which cannot be surmounted, except by an arbitrary process of excision, which we are hardly justified in adopting, and which would obliterate the value of the separate records. In chronology, even after the reign of Solomon, the same confusions which occur in other ancient histories occur here also. Lord Arthur Hervey, whose praiseworthy devotion to this branch of Biblical study gives peculiar weight to his authority, finds the dates so unmanageable as to suggest to him the probability that they are added by another hand. Others, such as Mr. Fynes Clinton, Mr. Greswell, and Dr. Pusey,¹ adopt the course of rejecting as spurious the indications of time which, from internal evidence, they cannot reconcile with what seems to be required by the history.

Still on the whole the substantially historical character of the narrative is admitted by all. Even the chronological uncertainties,² considerable as they are, are compressed within comparatively narrow limits. The constant references of the Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles to records which, though lost, were evidently contemporary, furnish a guarantee for the

¹ See, for example, 2 Kings xxiv. 8; 2 Chr. xxxvi. 9; Dr. Pusey's note on *Daniel the Prophet*, p. 313. ² As the nearest approximation, I have affixed the most important dates from Clinton's *Fasti Hellenici*, vol. i. Appendix, c. 5.

general truthfulness of the narrative, such as no other ancient history not itself contemporary can exhibit. The parallel stream of Prophetic literature gives a wholly independent confirmation of the same kind, in some instances extending even to incidents which are preserved to us only in the later Chronicles¹ and Josephus. The allusions to Jewish history in the Assyrian and Egyptian monuments, — so far as they can be trusted, — and the undoubted recurrences of the same imagery in the sculptures as that employed by the Prophets, are valuable as illustrations of the Biblical history, even where they cannot be used as confirmations of it.² Jewish and Arabian traditions relating to this period, if less striking, are at least more within the bounds of probability, and more likely to contain some grains of historical truth than those which relate to the Patriarchal age. And as before, so now, even when of unquestionably late origin, they seem to be worthy of notice, as filling up the outline of the forms which the personages and events of this history have assumed in large periods, and to large masses, of mankind.

¹ *E. g.* in the earthquake of Uzziah's reign (see Lecture XXXVII.), and the captivity of Manasseh (see Lecture XXXIX.). which they refer are such as have never been doubted by any one, and therefore are much more in a condition to give their weight to

² These monuments cannot properly be said to contain *confirmations* of the Jewish history — because, with very few exceptions, the only events in that history to the confessedly doubtful interpretation of the cuneiform inscriptions, than to receive any corroboration from it.

2. These are the materials from which the following Lectures are drawn. It will be seen that what they profess to give is not a commentary on the sacred text, but a delineation of the essential features of the history of the Jewish Church, during the second period¹ of its existence. In so doing, it has been impossible to suppress the horrors consequent on the "hardness of heart" which characterized the Israelite nation, nor the shortcomings² which disfigured some of its greatest heroes. "Let me freely speak unto "you of the Patriarch David:"³ such is the spirit in which we should endeavor to handle the story of the founder of the monarchy. "Elijah was a man of like "passions with ourselves:"⁴ such is the view with which we ought to approach even the grandest of the ancient Prophets. "These all, having obtained a good "report through faith, received not the promise:"⁵ such is the distinction which we ought always to bear in mind between the rough virtues and imperfect knowledge of the Old Dispensation, and the higher hopes and graces of the New.

But our faith in the transcendent interest of the story, the general nobleness of its characters, and the splendor of the truths proclaimed by it, ought not to

¹ For the three divisions of the History, see Introduction to Vol. I. p. xxxii. (comp. Luke ix. 54-56); Jer. xviii. 23 (comp. Luke xxiii. 34); xx. 7, 14; xxxviii. 27.

² The use of this word has been severely condemned. It is sufficient to refer to 2 Sam. xii. 7, 13, 31; 1 Kings xiii. 26; 2 Kings i. 10

³ Acts ii. 29.

⁴ James v. 17.

⁵ Heb. xi. 39.

allow of any fear lest they should suffer either from the occasional uncertainty of the form in which they have been handed down to us, or from a nearer view of the crust of human passion and error which encloses without obscuring the luminous centre of spiritual truth. The beauty of the narrative, and the charm of its incidents, if not belonging to the highest form of Inspiration, is yet a gift of no ordinary value, which perhaps no previous generation has been so well able to appreciate as our own. The lessons of perennial wisdom which the history imparts, even irrespectively of traditional usage, justify, I humbly trust, the practical applications that I have ventured to draw from it, and form the real grounds of distinction between it and other histories, as also between the essential and the subordinate parts of its own contents. In the sublime elevation¹ of the moral and spiritual teaching of the Psalmists and Prophets, in the eagerness with which they look out of themselves, and out of their own time and nation, for the ultimate hope of the human race—far more than in their minute predictions of future events—is to be found the best proof of their Prophetic spirit. In the loftiness of the leading characters of the epoch, who hand on the truth, each succeed-

¹ I have a peculiar pleasure in St. Paul's on Hebrew Prophecy—referring for a corroboration of the impressive alike from its contents views which I had ventured to ex- and from the circumstances of its press in my first volume, to the delivery.
impressive Sermon of the Dean of

ing as the other fails, with a mingled grace and strength which penetrate even into the outward form of the poetry or prose of the narrative—rather than in the marvellous displays of power which are found equally in the records of saints in other times and in other religions—is the true sign of the Supernatural, which no criticism or fear of criticism can ever eliminate. They rise “above the nature” not only of their own times, but of their own peculiar circumstances. They are not so much representative characters as exceptional. Their life and teaching is a struggle and protest against some of the deepest prejudices and passions of their countrymen, such as we find, if at all, only in two or three of the most exalted philosophers and heroes of other ages. The rude ceremonial, the idolatrous tendencies, even some of the worst vices, against which they contended, were almost inseparably intertwined with the popular devotions not only of the surrounding nations, but of their own people. “The religious world” of the Jewish Church is to them, as to a Greater than they, an unfailing cause of grief, of surprise, of indignation. In the name of God they attack that which to all around them seems to be religion. Their clinging trust to the One Supreme source of spiritual goodness and truth, with its boundless consequences, is the chief as it is the sufficient cause of their preëminence. Other parts of their history may be preternatural. This is in the highest degree super-

natural, because this alone brings them into direct communion with that which is Divine and Eternal.

3. Closely connected with this thought is the relation of the literature and history of the Jewish Commonwealth to the events of the Christian Dispensation. I may be allowed to express by an illustration the true mode of regarding this question. In the gardens of the Carthusian Convent, which the Dukes of Burgundy built near Dijon for the burial-place of their race, is a beautiful monument, which alone of that splendid edifice escaped the ravages of the French Revolution. It consists of a group of Prophets and Kings from the Old Testament, each holding in his hand a scroll of mourning from his writings—each with his own individual costume, and gesture, and look—each distinguished from each by the most marked peculiarities of age and character, absorbed in the thoughts of his own time and country. But above these figures is a circle of angels, as like each to each as the human figures are unlike. They too, as each overhangs and overlooks the Prophet below him, are saddened with grief. But their expression of sorrow is far deeper and more intense than that of the Prophets whose words they read. They see something in the Prophetic sorrow which the Prophets themselves see not; they are lost in the contemplation of the Divine Passion, of which the ancient saints below them are but the unconscious and indirect exponents.

This exquisite mediæval monument, expressing as

it does the instinctive feeling at once of the truthful artist and of the devout Christian, represents better than any words the sense of what we call in theological language "the Types" of the Old Testament. The heroes and saints of old times, not in Judea only,—though there more frequently than in any other country,—are indeed "types," that is, "likenesses," in their sorrows of the Greatest of all sorrows, in their joys of the Greatest of all joys, in their goodness of the Greatest of all goodness, in their truth of the Greatest of all truths. This deep inward connection between the events of their own time and the crowning close of the history of their whole nation—this gradual convergence towards the event which, by general acknowledgment, ranks chief in the annals of mankind—is clear not only to the all-searching Eye of Providence, but also to the eye of any who look above the stir and movement of earth. It is part not only of the foreknowledge of God, but of the universal workings of human nature and human history. The angels see though man sees not. The mind flies silently upwards from the earthly career of David, or Isaiah, or Ezekiel, to those vaster and wider thoughts which they imperfectly represented. "The rustic murmur" of Jerusalem was, although they knew it not, part of "the great wave" "that echoes round the world." It is a continuity recognized by the Philosophy of History no less than by Theology—by Hegel even more closely than by Augustine. But the sorrow, the joy, the goodness,

the truth of those ancient heroes is notwithstanding entirely their own. They are not mere machines or pictures. When they speak of their trials and difficulties they speak of them as from their own experience. By studying them with all the peculiarities of their time, we arrive at a profounder view of the truths and events to which their expressions and the story of their deeds may be applied in after ages, than if we regard them as the organs of sounds unintelligible to themselves and with no bearing on their own period. Where there is a sentiment common to them and to Christian times, a word or act which breaks forth into the distant future, it will be reverently caught up by those who are on the watch for it, to whom it will speak words beyond their words, and thoughts beyond their thoughts. "Did not our heart burn within us while He walked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" But, even in the act of uttering these sentiments, they still remained encompassed with human, Jewish, Oriental peculiarities, which must not be explained away or softened down, for the sake of producing an appearance of uniformity which may be found in the Koran, but which it is hopeless to seek in the Bible, and which, if it were found there, would completely destroy the historical character of its contents. To refuse to see the first and direct application of their expressions to themselves, is like an unwillingness — such as some simple and religious minds have felt — to ac-

knowledge the existence, or to dwell on the topography, of the city of Jerusalem and the wilderness of Arabia, because those localities have been so long associated with the higher truths of spiritual religion.

There will further result from this mode of approaching the subject the advantage of a juster appreciation of the Divine mission to which "the "Prophets and righteous men" of former times bore witness. Resemblance of mere outward circumstances, however exact, throws no light on the essential character of Him whose life they are brought to illustrate; nor is it any such kind of resemblance which justifies the relation of that Life to the personal needs of mankind. But a real resemblance of moral and mental qualities or situations, which can be universally felt and understood, is a direct help to feel and understand in what consists the Character and Person of Him whom we are called upon to love and adore, and in what consists the possibility of our approach to Him. It is a fruitful illustration of the argument which pervades the "Analogy" of Bishop Butler, and which has been well brought out by our best modern divines,—namely, that "God "gave His Son to the world, in the same way of goodness as He affords particular persons the friendly "assistance of their fellow-creatures . . . in the same "way of goodness, though in a transcendent and infinitely higher degree."¹ It is only from the community of spirit which exists between the Manifes-

¹ Butler's *Analogy*, Part II. ch. v. §§ 5, 7.

tation of Christ and the likeness of Himself in the good men who preceded or who succeeded, that we can speak of them either as His types or His followers. It is by thus speaking of them that we shall best conceive the work of Him "in whom in the "dispensation of the fulness of time all things were "gathered together in one."

Both theirs and ours Thou art.
As we and they are Thine ;
Kings, Prophets, Patriarchs, all have part
Along the sacred line.

Oh bond of union, dear
And strong as is Thy grace ;
Saints, parted by a thousand year,
May there in heart embrace.¹

The immediate preparation for that Manifestation in the period between the Captivity and the final overthrow of Jerusalem and of the Jewish nation may be the subject of another volume, if life and strength are granted, amidst the pressure of other engagements, to continue a task begun in earlier and less disturbed days.

May the Students for whom these Lectures were specially intended receive them as the memorial of efforts, however imperfect, (if I may employ the words in which the plan of these Lectures was first indicated,) "so to delineate the outward events of "the Sacred History as that they should come home "with new power to those who by familiarity have

¹ *Christian Year*, on "The Circumcision of Christ."

“almost ceased to regard them as historical truth at
“all: so to bring out their inward spirit that the
“more complete realization of their outward form
“should not degrade, but exalt, the Faith of which
“they are the vehicle.”

DEANERY, WESTMINSTER:

November 2, 1865.

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THE HOUSE OF SAUL.

SPECIAL AUTHORITIES FOR THIS PERIOD.

1. 1 Sam. ix. 1 — 2 Sam. iv. 12; ix. ; xvi. 1—14; xix. 16—30; xxi. 1—14; 1 Kings ii. 8, 9; 36—46; 1 Chron. viii. 33—40; ix. 35; x. 14 (Hebrew and LXX.).
2. Jewish Traditions: in Josephus, *Ant.* vi. 4—vii. 2, § 1; vii. 5, § 5; 9, § 3, 4; 11, § 3; viii. 1, § 5: in Otho's *Lexicon Rabbinico philologicum*, "Saul:" and in the notes of Meyer to the *Seder Olam*.
3. Mussulman Traditions: in the Koran (ii. 247—252); and in D'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale*, "Thalout ben Kissaï."

PEDIGREE OF THE HOUSE OF SAUL.

[illegible]

THE HOUSE OF SAUL.

LECTURE XXI.

SAUL.

SAMUEL is the chief figure of the transitional period which opens the history of the Monarchy.¹ But there is another, on whom the character of the epoch is impressed still more strongly,—who belongs to this period especially, and could belong to no other.

Saul is the first King of Israel. In him that new and strange idea became impersonated. In him we feel that we have made a marked advance in the history, — from the patriarchal and nomadic state, which concerns us mainly by its contrast with our own, to that fixed and settled state which has more or less pervaded the whole condition of the Church ever since.

But, although in outward form Saul belonged to the new epoch, although even in spirit he from time to time threw himself into it, yet on the whole he is a product of the earlier condition. Whilst Samuel's existence comprehends and overlaps both periods in the calmness of a higher elevation, the career of Saul derives its peculiar interest from the fact that it is the eddy in which both streams converge. In that vortex he struggles — the centre of events and persons greater than himself; and in that struggle he is borne down, and

¹ See Lecture XVIII.

lost. It is this pathetic interest which has more than once suggested the story of Saul as a subject for the modern drama, and which it is now proposed to draw out of the well-known incidents of his life. He is, we may say, the first character of the Jewish history which we are able to trace out in any minuteness of detail. He is the first in regard to whom we can make out that whole connection of a large family, father, uncle, cousin, sons, grandsons, which, as a modern historian¹ well observes, is so important in making us feel that we have acquired a real acquaintance with any personage of past times.

From the household of Abiel of the tribe of Benjamin two sons were born, related to each other The family of Saul. either as cousins, or as uncle and nephew.² The elder was Abner, the younger was SAUL.

It is uncertain in what precise spot of the territory of that fierce tribe the original seat of the family lay. It may have been the conical eminence amongst its central hills, known from its subsequent connection with him as Gibeah-of-Saul. It was more probably the village of Zelah, on its extreme southern frontier, in which was the ancestral burial-place.³ Although the family itself was of small importance, Kish, the son or grandson of Abiel, was regarded as a powerful and wealthy chief; and it is in connection with the determination to recover his lost property that his son Saul first appears before us.

A drove of asses, still the cherished animal of the Israelite chiefs,⁴ had gone astray on the mountains. In search of them,—by pathways of which every stage is mentioned, as if to mark the importance of the journey,

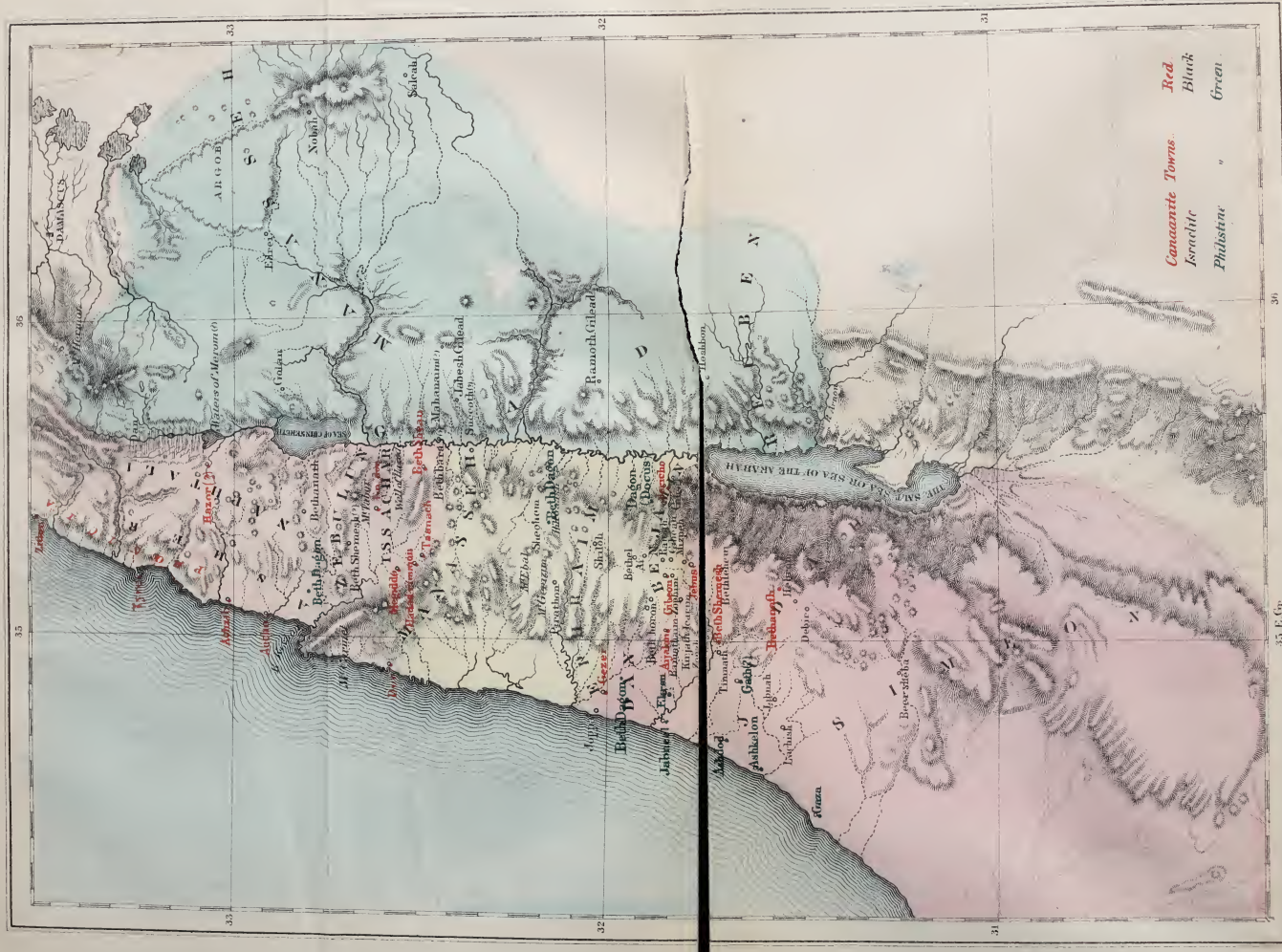
¹ Palgrave's *Normandy*.

³ 2 Sam. xxi. 14.

² See the Pedigree on p. 4.

⁴ See Lecture IV.

PALESTINE AFTER THE CONQUEST.



PALESTINE AFTER THE CONQUEST.



but which have not yet been identified,¹—Saul wandered at his father's bidding, accompanied by a trustworthy servant,² traditionally believed to have been Doeg the Edomite, who acted as guide and guardian of the young man. After a three days' circuit they arrived at the foot of a hill surmounted by a town,³ when Saul proposed to return home, but was deterred by the advice of the servant, who suggested that before doing so they should consult a "man of God," a "seer," as to the fate of the asses, securing his oracle by a present (*bakhshish*) of a quarter of a silver shekel. They were instructed by the maidens at the well outside the city to catch the seer as he came out on his way to a sacred eminence, where a sacrificial feast was waiting for his benediction. At the gate they met the seer for the first time. It was Samuel. A Divine intimation had indicated to him the approach and the future destiny of the youthful Benjamite. Surprised at his language, but still obeying his call, they ascended to the high place, and in the inn or⁴ caravanserai at the top found thirty or seventy⁵ guests assembled, amongst whom they took the chief seats. In anticipation of some distinguished stranger, Samuel had bade the cook reserve a boiled shoulder, from which Saul, as the chief guest, was bidden to tear off the first morsel.⁶ They then descended to the city, and a bed was prepared for Saul on the house-top. At daybreak Samuel roused him. They descended again to the skirts of the town, and

¹ See *Sinai and Palestine*, Ch. IV. note 1.

² The word is *na'ar*, "servant," not '*ebed*, "slave."

³ 1 Sam. ix. 11–13. The situation of the town is wrapt in the same geographical obscurity that tracks the

whole journey of Saul. See Lecture XVIII. p. 454.

⁴ Τὸ καράλυμα, LXX., ix. 27.

⁵ LXX.; and Joseph. *Ant.* vi. 4, § 1.

⁶ LXX., ix. 22–24.

there (the servant having left them) Samuel poured over Saul's head the consecrated oil, and with a kiss of salutation announced to him that he was to be the ruler and deliverer of the nation.¹ From that moment, a fresh life dawned upon him. Under the outward garb of his domestic vocation, the new destiny had been thrust upon him. The trivial forms of an antiquated phase of religion had been the means of introducing him to the Prophet of the Future. Each stage of his returning, as of his outgoing route, is marked with the utmost exactness, and at each stage he meets the incidents which, according to Samuel's prediction, were to mark his coming fortunes.² By the sepulchre of his mighty ancestress — known then, and known still as Rachel's tomb — he met two men,³ who announced to him the recovery of the asses. There his lower cares were to cease. By a venerable oak — distinguished by the name not elsewhere given, the "oak⁴ of Tabor" — he met three men carrying gifts of kids and bread, and a skin of wine, as an offering to Bethel. There, as if to indicate his new dignity, two of the loaves were offered to him. By "the hill of God" (whatever may be the precise spot indicated, — seemingly close to his own home) he met a "chain" of prophets descending with musical instruments. There he caught the inspiration from them, as the sign of a grander, loftier life than he had ever before conceived.⁵

This is what may be called the private, inner view of his call. There was yet another outer call, which is related independently. An assembly was convened by Samuel at Mizpeh, and lots (so often practised at that

¹ LXX., *ibid.* 25-x. 1.

⁴ Mistranslated in A. V. "plain."

² 1 Sam. x. 2-6, 9, 10.

⁵ See Ewald, iii. 31.

³ At Zelzah, or (LXX.) "leaping for joy."

time) were cast to find the tribe and the family which was to produce the king. Saul was named, and found hid in the circle of baggage which surrounded the encampment.¹ His stature at once conciliated the public feeling, and for the first time the shout was raised, afterwards so often repeated down to modern times, "Long live the King!"² The Monarchy, with that conflict of tendencies, of which the mind of Samuel is the best reflex,³ was established in the person of the young Prophet, whom he had thus called to this perilous eminence.

Up to this point Saul had been only the shy and retiring youth of the family. He is employed in the common work of the farm. His father, when he delays his return, mourns for him, as having lost his way.⁴ He hangs on the servant for directions as to what he shall do, which he would not have known himself.⁵ At every step of Samuel's revelations he is taken by surprise. "Am not I a Benjamite? of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?"⁶ He turns his huge shoulder⁷ on Samuel, apparently still unconscious of what awaits him. The last thing which those that knew him in former days can expect is, that Saul should be among the Prophets.⁸ Long afterwards the memorial of this unaptness for high aspirations remained enshrined in the national proverbs. Even after the change had come upon him, he still shrunk from the destiny which was opening before him. "Tell me, I pray thee, what Sam-

¹ 1 Sam. x. 17-22.

² Ibid. 23, 24 (Heb.).

³ See Lecture XVIII.

⁴ 1 Sam. ix. 5; x. 2.

⁵ Ibid. ix. 7-10.

⁶ Ibid. 21.

⁷ Ibid. x. 9; A. V. "back."

⁸ Ibid. x. 11, 12.

"uel said unto thee. And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not."¹ On the day of his election he was nowhere to be found, and he was as though he were deaf.² Some there were, who even after his appointment still said, "How shall this man save us?" "and they brought him no presents."³ And he shrank back into private life, and was in his fields, and with his yoke of oxen.⁴

But there was one distinction which marked out Saul for his future office. "The desire of all Israel" was already, unconsciously, "on him and on his father's house."⁵ He had the one gift by which in that primitive time a man seemed to be worthy of rule. He was "goodly,"—"there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he,"⁶ "from his shoulders and upward he towered above all the people." When he stood among the people, Samuel could say of him, "*See ye him, look at him whom the Lord hath chosen*, that there is none like him among all the people."⁷ It is as in the days of the Judges, as in the Homeric days of Greece. Agamemnon, like Saul, is head and shoulders taller than the people.⁸ Like Saul, too, he has that peculiar air and dignity expressed by the Hebrew word which we translate "good" or "goodly." This is the ground of the epithet which became fixed as part of his name,—"*Saul the chosen*," "*the chosen of the Lord*."⁹

In the Mussulman traditions this is the only trait of

¹ 1 Sam. x. 16.

² Ibid. 21, 22; 27 (Heb.).

³ Ibid. 27.

⁴ Ibid. xi. 5, 7.

⁵ Ibid. ix. 20.

⁶ Ibid. ix. 2.

⁷ Ibid. x. 24.

⁸ Compare the description and remarks in Gladstone's Homer, vol. iii. 404.

⁹ 2 Sam. xxi. 6.

Saul which is preserved. His name has there been almost lost,—he is known only as Thalût, “the tall one.”¹ In the Hebrew songs of his own time he was known by a more endearing but not less expressive indication of the same grace. His stately, towering form, standing under the pomegranate tree above the precipice of Migron,² or on the pointed crags of Mich-mash, or the rocks of En-gedi, claimed for him the title of the “wild roe, the gazelle,” perched aloft, “the pride and glory of Israel.”³ Against the giant Philistines a giant king was needed. The time for the little stripling of the house of Jesse was close at hand, but was not yet come. Saul and Jonathan, “swifter than eagles and stronger than lions,”⁴ still seemed the fittest champions of Israel. “When Saul saw any *strong* man or any *valiant* man, he took him unto him.”⁵ He, in his gigantic panoply, that would fit none but himself,⁶ with the spear that he had in his hand, of the same form and fashion as the spear of Goliath, was a host in himself.

And when we look at the state of Israel at the time, we find that we are still in the condition which would most justify such a choice. His residence, like that of the ancient Judges, is still at the seat of the family. That beacon-like cone, conspicuous amongst the uplands of Benjamin, then and still known by the name of “the Hill” (*gibeah*), had been selected apparently by his ancestor Jehiel,⁷ for the foundation of one of the chief

¹ D’Herbelot, *Thalout ben Kissaï*.

² 1 Sam. xiv. 2.

³ 2 Sam. i. 19, the word translated “beauty,” but the same term (*tsebi*) in 2 Sam. ii. 18, and elsewhere, is translated “roe.”

⁴ 2 Sam. i. 23.

⁵ 1 Sam. xiv. 52.

⁶ Ibid. xvii. 39.

⁷ When Abiel, or Jehiel (1 Chr. viii. 29, ix. 35), is called the “father of Gibeon,” it probably means founder of *Gibeah*.

cities in Benjamin. There Saul had "his house," and his name superseded the more ancient title of the city as derived from the tribe.¹ And there, king as he was, we might fancy ourselves still in the days of Shamgar or of Gideon, when we see him following his herd of oxen in the field, and driving them home at the close of day up the steep ascent of the city.

It was on one of these evening returns that his career received the next sharp stimulus which drove him on to his destined work. A loud wail, such as Relief of
Jabesh-
Gibeah. goes up in an Eastern city at the tidings of some great calamity, strikes his ear. He said, "What aileth the people that they weep?" They told him the news that had reached them from their kinsmen beyond the Jordan. The work which Jephthah² had wrought in that wild region had to be done over again. Ammon was advancing, and the first victims were the inhabitants of Jabesh, connected by the romantic adventure of the previous generation with the tribe³ of Benjamin. This one spark of outraged family feeling was needed to awaken the dormant spirit of the sluggish giant. He was a true Benjamite from first to last. "The Spirit of God⁴ came upon him," as on Samson. His shy retiring nature vanished. His anger flamed out, and he took two oxen from the herd that he was driving, and (here again, in accordance with the like expedient in that earlier time, only in a somewhat gentler form) he hewed them in pieces, and sent their bones through the country with the significant warning, "Whosoever cometh not after Saul, and after

¹ Formerly "Gibeah of Benjamin," henceforth "Gibeah of Saul," down to the time of Josephus (*B. J.* v. 2, § 1).

² See Lecture XVI.

³ *Judg.* xx. See Lecture XIII.

⁴ The same word in 1 Sam. x. 10, xi. 6, and in *Judg.* xiv. 6, 19; xv. 14.

“Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen.” An awe fell upon the people: they rose as one man. In one day they crossed the Jordan. Jabesh was rescued. It was the deliverance of his own tribe The first victory. which thus at once seated him on the throne securely. The East of the Jordan was regarded as specially the conquest of Saul. The people of Jabesh never forgot their debt of gratitude. The house of Saul were safe there when their cause was ruined everywhere else.

This was his first great victory. The monarchy was inaugurated afresh.¹ But he still so far resembles the earlier Judges as to be virtually king only within his own tribe. Almost all his exploits are confined to this immediate neighborhood. In that neighborhood the Philistines are still in the ascendant, as in the days of Samson and Eli. Sanctuaries of Dagon are found, far away from the sea-coast, up to the very verge of the Jordan valley.² It had become a Philistine war.³ istine country, almost as much as Spain had in the ninth century become a Mussulman country. As there, the Arabic names and Arabic architecture reveal the existence of the intruding race up to the very frontier of Biscay and the Asturias, so in the very heart of Palestine, we stumble on the traces of the Philistine. At Gibeah or at Ramah, close by one of the Prophetic schools, is a garrison or exacting officer of the Philistines. At Michmash is another; at Geba is another. At any harvest, an incursion of the Philistines,³ with their animals to carry off the ripe corn, was a regular event, to be constantly expected. The people are depressed to the same point as before the time of Debo-

¹ 1 Sam. xi. 1–15. But in xii. 12, this is described as preceding the election of Saul.

² See the map, *Palestine after the Conquest*.

³ 1 Sam. xxiii. 11.

rah, when "there was not a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel." "There was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Israelites make themselves swords and spears. But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every one his share, and his coulter, and his ax, and his mattock."¹ Saul and Jonathan alone had arms. The complete panoply² of the Philistine giant was a marvel to the unarmed Israelites.

As in the days of the Midianite invasion, the Israelites vanished from before their enemies into the caves and pits in which the limestone rocks abound.³ "Behold the Hebrews come out of the holes where they have hid themselves," is the exclamation of the Philistines, as they saw any adventurous warriors creeping out of their lurking-places.⁴ The whole nation was pushed eastward. The monarchy was like a wind-driven tree. The sharp blast from Philistia blew it awry. The "Hebrews" (so they are usually⁵ called by their Philistine conquerors) are said, as if in allusion to their *repassing* their ancient boundary, to have "*passed*⁶ over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead." The sanctuaries long frequented in the centre of the country, Bethel, and Mizpeh, and Shiloh, were deserted, and the King had to be inaugurated, and the thanksgivings after the victories had to be celebrated, in the first ground that had been won by Joshua in the very outskirts of Palestine — at Gilgal⁷ in the valley of the Jordan. In the midst of such a renewal of the disturbed days of old, Saul was

¹ 1 Sam. xiii. 20; Judges v. 8.

⁶ Ibid. xiii. 3, 7. See Lecture I.

² 1 Sam. xvii. 4.

p. 10.

³ Ibid. xiii. 6. See Lecture XV.

⁷ See 1 Sam. x. 8, xi. 14, xiii. 4, 7, xv. 4 (LXX.), 12.

⁴ Ibid. xiv. 11.

⁵ Ibid. iv. 6, 9, xiii. 19, xiv. 11,

xxix. 3.

exactly what an ancient Judge would have been. As in each instance they were called up from the tribes especially in danger — as Barak was raised up to defend the tribe of Naphthali from Jabin, and Gideon to defend the tribe of Manasseh against Midian, so Saul of the tribe of Benjamin was the natural champion of his country, now that the heights of his own tribe — Gibeah, and Geba, and Ramah — and the passes of his own tribe — Beth-horon and Michmash — were occupied by the hostile garrisons. We see him leaning on his gigantic spear, whether it be on the summit of the rock Rimmon, to which the remnant of his tribe had once fled before, or under the tamarisk of Ramah,¹ as Deborah had of old judged Israel under the palm-tree in Bethel, or on the heights of Gibeah. There he stood with his small band, his faithful six hundred, and as he wept aloud² over the misfortunes of his country and of his tribe, another voice swelled the wild indignant lament — the voice of Jonathan his son.

At this point we turn aside to the noble figure which henceforth appears by the side of Saul. Like Jonathan. Saul, Jonathan belongs to the earlier age; but is one of its finest specimens. He had, in a sudden act of youthful daring, as when Gideon's brothers had risen against the Midianites on Tabor, given the signal for a general revolt, by attacking and slaying³ the Philistine officer stationed close to the point where his own position was fixed. The invasion which followed was more crushing than ever; and from this, as Jonathan had been the first to provoke it, so he was the first to deliver his people. He determined to undertake the whole risk

¹ 1 Sam. xxii. 6.

³ Ibid. xiii. 3, 4 (LXX. Ewald, iii.

² Ibid. xiii. 16 (LXX. and Jos.). 41).

himself. "The day"¹—the day fixed by him for his enterprise approached. He had communicated it to none except the youth, whom, like all the chiefs of that time, — Gideon, Saul, David, Joab, — he retained as his armor-bearer. The Philistine garrison was intrenched above the precipitous pass of Michmash, that forms so marked a feature in the hills of Benjamin, between the two steep crags, whose sharpness has been long since worn away, but which then presented the appearance of two huge teeth² projecting from the jaws of the ravine. The words of Jonathan are few, but they breathe the peculiar spirit of the ancient Israelite warrior, "Come and let us go over," that is, cross the deep chasm, "to the garrison of the Philistines. It may be "that Jehovah will work for us: for there is no restraint "for Jehovah to work by many or by few." It was that undaunted faith which caused "one to chase a thousand, "and two to put ten thousand to flight,"³ the true secret of the slightness of the losses, implied if not stated, in the accounts of the early wars of Israel against Canaan. The answer of the armor-bearer marks the close friendship between the two young men; already similar to that which afterwards grew up between Jonathan and David. "Do all that is in thine heart: 'look back at me,' "behold *I* am with thee:⁴ as thy heart is my heart." Like Gideon, he determined to draw an omen from the conduct of the enemy, the more because he had no time to consult Priest or Prophet before his departure. If the garrison threatened to descend, he would remain below; if, on the other hand, they raised a challenge, he would accept it. It was the first dawn of day⁵ when

¹ 1 Sam. xiv. 1 (LXX.).

³ Deut. xxxii. 30.

² Ibid. xiv. 4 (Hebrew); see MICH-
MASH in *Dict. of Bible*.

⁴ 1 Sam. xiv. 7 (Heb.).

⁵ Josephus, *Ant.* vi. 6, § 2.

the two warriors emerged from behind the rocks. Their appearance was taken by the Philistines as a furtive apparition of "the Hebrews coming forth out of their holes" like wild creatures from a warren,—and they were welcomed with a scoffing invitation, "Come up, and we will show you a thing." Jonathan took them at their word. It was an enterprise that exactly suited his peculiar turn. He was "swifter than an eagle,"—he could, as it were, soar up into the eagles' nests. He was "stronger than a lion;"¹ he could plant his claws in the crags, and force his way into the heart of the enemy's lair. His chief weapon was his bow. His whole tribe was a tribe of archers,² and he was the chief archer³ of them all. Accordingly he, with his armor-bearer behind him, climbed on his hands and feet up the face of the cliff, and when he came full in view of the enemy, they both discharged such a flight of arrows, stones, and pebbles from their bows, cross-bows, and slings, that twenty men fell at the first onset, and the garrison fled in a panic.⁴ The panic spread to the camp, and the surrounding hordes of marauders. An earthquake blended with the terror of the moment. It was, as the sacred writer expresses it, a universal "trembling," "a trembling of God."⁵ The shaking of the earth, and the shaking of the enemies' host, and the shaking of the Israelite hearts with the thrill of victory, all leaped together. On all sides the Philistines felt themselves surrounded. The Israelites whom they had taken as slaves during the last three days⁶ rose in mutiny in the camp. Those who lay hid in the caverns

The battle
of Mich-
mash.

1 1 Chr. xii. 2.

2 2 Sam. i. 23.

3 Ibid. i. 22; 1 Sam. xviii. 4 xx.

4 1 Sam. xiv. 13, 14 (LXX.).

5 Ibid. 15 (Hebrew).

6 Ibid. 21 (LXX.).

and deep clefts with which the neighborhood abounds, sprang out of their subterraneous dwellings. From the distant height of Gibeah, Saul, who had watched the confusion in astonishment, descended headlong and joined in the pursuit. It was a battle that was remembered as reaching clean over the country, from the extreme eastern to the extreme western pass — down the rocky defile of Beth-horon, down into the valley of Aijalon. The victory was so decisive as to give its name, “the war of Michmash,”¹ to the whole campaign. The Philistines were driven back not to reappear till the close of the reign. The memory of the event was long preserved in the altar, the first raised under the monarchy, on the spot where they had first halted.

That altar is also a sign that we are still within the confines of the former generation. It was the last relic of the age of vows. Saul had invoked a solemn curse on any one who should eat before the evening. When Jonathan, after his desperate exertions, found himself in the forest, which, not yet cleared, ran up into the hills from the plain of Sharon,² he was overcome by the darkness³ and dizziness of long fatigue. The father and the son had not met all that day. Jonathan was ignorant of his father’s imprecation, and putting forth the staff which (with his sling and bow) had been his only weapon, tasted the honey which overflowed from the wild hives as they dashed through the forest. The people in general were restrained by fear of the Royal Curse; but the moment that the day with its enforced fast was over, they flew, like Mussulmans at sunset during the fast of Ramazan, upon the captured cattle, and devoured them even to the brutal neglect of the

¹ 1 Sam. xiii. 22 (LXX.).

³ 1 Sam. xiv. 27 (LXX.).

² See *Sinai and Palestine*, Chap. VI.

law forbidding the eating of flesh which contained blood.¹ This violation of the sacred usage Saul endeavored to control by erecting a large stone which served the purpose at once of a rude altar and a rude table. In the dead of night, after this wild revel was over, he proposed that the pursuit should be continued, and then, when the silence of the oracle of the High Priest disclosed to him that his vow had been broken, he at once, like Jephthah, prepared himself for the dreadful sacrifice of his child. But there was now a freer and more understanding spirit in the nation at large. What was tolerated in the time of Jephthah, when every man did what was right in his own eyes, and when the obligation of such vows overrode all other considerations, — was no longer tolerated. The people interposed in Jonathan's behalf. They recognized the religious aspect of his great exploit. They rallied round him with a zeal that overbore even the royal vow, and rescued Jonathan, that he died not.² It was the dawn of a better day. It was the national spirit, now in advance of their chief, — animated by the same Prophetic teaching, which through the voice of Samuel had now made itself felt, — the conviction that there was a higher duty even than outward sacrifice or exact fulfilment of literal vows.

This leads us to the consideration of the other side of the character of Saul himself. He was, as we have seen, in outward form and in the special mission to which he was called, but as one of the class of the old heroic age, which was passing away. But he was some-

¹ Lev. xvii. 10, 11; Deut. xii. 23.

² Josephus (*Ant.* vi. 6, § 5) puts into Jonathan's mouth a speech of patriotic self-devotion, after the man-

ner of a Greek or Roman. Ewald supposes that a substitute was killed in his place.

thing more than these had been. His call was after a different manner from that of the older Judges. He had shared in the Prophetic inspiration of the time. He had shared in an inward as well as an outward change. "God," we are told, "gave him another heart," and "he became another man." The three tokens which Samuel foretold to him well expressed the significance of the change, which, in modern language, would be called his "conversion."¹ He was the first of the long succession of Jewish Kings. He was the first recorded instance of inauguration, by that singular ceremonial which, in imitation of the Hebrew rite, has descended to the coronation of our own sovereigns. The sacred oil² was used for his ordination as for a Priest. He was the "Lord's Anointed" in a peculiar sense, that invested³ his person with a special sanctity. And from him the name of "the Anointed One" was handed on till it received in the latest days of the Jewish Church its very highest application, — in Hebrew, or Aramaic, the *Messiah*; in Greek, the *Christ*. Regal state gradually gathered round him. Ahijah, the surviving representative of the doomed house of Ithamar, was always at hand, in the dress of the sacred Ephod, to answer his questions. The Ephod was the substitute for the exiled Ark.⁴ A new sanctuary arose not far from Gibeah, at Nob, on the northern shoulder of Olivet, where the Tabernacle was again set up, — where the shewbread was still kept, and where the trophies of the Philistine war were suspended within the sacred tent.⁵

¹ See pp. 8, 9.

² Comp. 1 Sam. x. 1; xiv. 13.

³ 2 Sam. i. 14, 21; 1 Sam. xxiv. 6,
10; xxvi. 9, 16.

⁴ Comp. 1 Chr. xiii. 3; 1 Sam.

xiv. 18, where the LXX. by reading
"ephod" for "ark," corrects an ob-
vious mistake.

⁵ 1 Sam. xxi. 9.

The beginnings of a "host"¹ are now first indicated. The office of "captain of the host" is filled by his kinsman, the generous and princely Abner.² Now also is established the body-guard, always round the King's³ person, selected from his own tribe,⁴ for their stature⁵ and beauty, and at their head the second officer⁶ of the kingdom, one who united with the arts of war the noblest gifts of peace, one whom we shall recognize elsewhere than in the court of Saul,—David, the son of Jesse. And, closely bound with this high officer is the heir of the throne, the great archer of the tribe of Benjamin, the heroic Jonathan. These three sat⁷ at the King's table. Another inferior officer appears incidentally: "the keeper of the royal mules"⁸ and chief of the household slaves⁹—the "*comes stabuli*"—the "constable" of the King, such as appears in the later monarchy.¹⁰ He is the first instance of a foreigner employed in a high function in Israel, being an Edomite or Syrian,¹¹ of the name of Doeg,—according to Jewish tradition¹² the steward who accompanied Saul in his pursuit after the asses, who counselled him to send for David, and whose son ultimately slew him;—according to the sacred narrative, a person of vast and sinister influence in his master's counsels.

¹ The "host" appears immediately after his accession, in the word (*hachäl*) mistranslated "band" in 1 Sam. x. 26. Comp. xiii. 2.

² 1 Sam. xiv. 50.

³ "The servants before his face," 1 Sam. xvi. 15: "Young men," xvi. 17.

⁴ 1 Sam. xxii. 7; Joseph. *Ant.* vii. 1, § 4.

⁵ 1 Sam. xiv. 52; Joseph. *Ant.* vi. 6, § 6.

⁶ 1 Sam. xxii. 14. (Ewald, iii. 98.)

⁷ 1 Sam. xx. 25.

⁸ Ibid. xxi. 7 (LXX.); Joseph. *Ant.* vi. 12, §§ 1, 4.

⁹ Ibid. xxii. 9.

¹⁰ 1 Chr. xxvii. 30.

¹¹ 1 Sam. xxi. 7; xxii. 9. The Hebrew here, as in other cases, has "Edomite," the LXX. and Josephus "Syrian."

¹² Jerome, *Qu. Heb.* on 1 Sam. xxi. 7; xxii. 9; 2 Sam. i.

The King himself was distinguished by marks of royalty not before observed in the nation. His tall spear, already noticed, was always by his side, in repose,¹ at his meals,² when sleeping,³ when in battle.⁴ He wore a diadem round his brazen helmet and a bracelet on his arm.⁵ His victories soon fulfilled the hopes for which his office was created. Moab, Edom, Ammon, Amalek, and even the distant Zobah,⁶ felt his power. The Israelite women met him on his return from his wars with songs of greeting; and eagerly looked out for the scarlet robes and golden ornaments which he brought back as their prey.⁷

From these signs of hope and life in the house of Saul, we turn to the causes of its downfall.

If Samuel is the great example of an ancient saint growing up from childhood to old age without a sudden conversion, Saul is the first direct example of the mixed character often produced by such a conversion, a call coming in the midway of life to rouse the man to higher thoughts than the lost asses of his father's household, or than the tumults of war and victory. He became "another man," yet not entirely. He was, as is so often the case, half-converted, half-roused. His mind moved unequally and disproportionately in its new sphere. Backwards and forwards in the names of his children, we see alternately the signs of the old heathenish superstition, and of the new purified religion of JEHOVAH. Jonathan, his first-born, is "the gift of Jehovah;" Melchi-shua is "the help of Moloch;" his grandson Merib-baal is "the soldier of

¹ 1 Sam. xviii. 10; xix. 9.

⁴ 2 Sam. i. 6.

² Ibid. xx. 23; in A. V. mistranslated "javelin," and the article omitted.

⁵ Ibid. i. 10; 1 Sam. xvii. 38.

⁶ 1 Sam. xiv. 47.

⁷ Ibid. xviii. 6; 2 Sam. i. 24.

³ 1 Sam. xxvi. 11.

“Baal;” and his fourth son, Ish-baal, “the man of Baal;” and here again “Baal” is swept out, and appears only as “Bosheth,” the “shame or reproach,” — Mephibosheth, Ish-bosheth.¹ He caught the Prophetic inspiration, not continuously, but only in fitful gusts. Passionately he would enter into it for the time, as he came within the range of his better associations, tear off his clothes, and lie stretched on the ground under its influence for a night and a day together. But then he would be again the slave of his common pursuits. His religion was never blended with his moral nature. It broke out in wild, ungovernable acts of zeal and superstition, and then left him more a prey than ever to his own savage disposition. With the prospects and the position of a David, he remained to the end a Jephthah or a Samson, with this difference,—that, having outlived the age of Jephthah and of Samson, he could not be as they; and the struggle, therefore, between what he was and what he might have been, grew fiercer as years went on; and the knowledge of Samuel, and the companionship of David, become to him a curse instead of a blessing.

Of all the checks on the dangers incident to the growth of an Oriental monarchy in the Jewish nation, the most prominent was that which His opposition to the Prophets. Providence supplied in the contemporaneous growth of the Prophetical office. But it was just this far-reaching vision of the past and future, which Saul was unable to understand. At the very outset of his career, Samuel, the great representative of the Prophetical order, had warned him not to enter on his kingly duties till he should appear to inaugurate them and to instruct him in them. It would seem to have been almost immedi-

¹ 1 Sam. xiv. 4, 9; xxxi. 2; 1 Chr. viii. 33.

ately after his first call, that the occasion arose. The war with the Philistines was impending. He could not restrain the vehemence of his religious emotions. As King, he had the right to sacrifice. Without a sacrifice it seemed to him impossible to advance to battle. He sacrificed, and by that ritual zeal defied the warning of the Prophetic monitor. It was the crisis of his trial.¹ He had shown that he could not understand the distinction between moral and ceremonial duty, on which the greatness of his people depended. It was not because he sacrificed, but because he thought sacrifice greater than obedience, that the curse descended upon him.

Again, in the sacred war against Amalek, there is no reason to suppose that Saul spared the king for any other reason than that for which he retained the spoil, — namely, to make a more splendid show at the sacrificial thanksgiving.² Such was the Jewish tradition preserved by Josephus,³ who expressly says that Agag was saved for his stature and beauty; and such is the general impression left by the description of the celebration of the victory. Saul rides to the southern Carmel in a chariot,⁴ never mentioned elsewhere, and sets up a monument there, which, according to the Jewish traditions,⁵ was a triumphal arch of olives, myrtles, and palms. The name given to God on the occasion is taken from this crowning triumph, The “Victory of Israel.”⁶ This second act of disobedience calls down the second curse, in the form of that Prophetic truth which stands out

¹ 1 Sam. xiii. 8, compared with 1 Sam. x. 8, with which it must be taken in close connection. See The-
nius *ad loc.* and Ewald.

² 1 Sam. xv. 21.

³ *Ant.* vi. 7, § 2.

⁴ 1 Sam. xv. 12 (LXX.).

⁵ Jerome, *Qu. Heb.* *ad loc.*

⁶ 1 Sam. xv. 29 (Heb.); Vulg. “*triumphans* ;” and comp. 1 Chr. xxix. 11.

all the more impressively from the savage scene with which it is connected. "Hath Jehovah as great delight "in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the "word of the Lord? Behold, to obey is more than "good sacrifice, to hearken than the fat of rams."¹ The struggle between Samuel and Saul in their final parting is indicated by the rent of Samuel's robe of state, as he tears himself away from Saul's grasp,² and by the long anguish of Samuel for the separation. "Samuel mourned "for Saul." "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul?"³ The terrible vengeance exacted on the fallen King by Samuel is the measure of Saul's delinquency. The mighty chief whose sword was so dreaded amongst the mothers⁴ of Israel was now himself crouching⁵ awe-struck at the feet of the Prophet, who hewed him limb from limb — a victim (so the narrative seems to imply) more fitted for the justice of God than the helpless oxen and sheep, whose fat carcasses and whose senseless bleating and lowing filled the Prophet's soul with such supreme disdain. The ferocious form of the offering of Agag belongs happily to an extinct dispensation. But its spirit reminds us of the famous saying of Peter the Great, when entreated in a mortal illness to secure the Divine mercy by the pardon of some criminals condemned to death: "Carry out the sentence. Heaven "will be propitiated by this act of justice."⁶ To receive benefits from the society of those whom we condemn, and yet to exclaim against the pollution of it, — to set at naught obvious duties for the sake of the religious as-

1 1 Sam. xv. 22 (Hebrew).

2 For the gesture, see Joseph. *Ant.* vi. 7, § 5.

3 1 Sam. xv. 35; xvi. 1.

4 Ibid. xv. 33.

5 It is doubtful whether the word

rendered "delicately" (1 Sam. xv.) in the A. V. should be translated "in joy" or "in terror." See Thenius *ad loc.* The Vulgate gives both *pinguis-simus* and *tremens*.

6 Stahlin's *Peter the Great*, § 2.

cendency of our own peculiar views, is, as has been well said, the modern likeness of the piety of Saul when he spared the best of the oxen and the sheep to sacrifice to the Lord in Gilgal.¹

What Saul did then, he was doing always. His religious zeal was always breaking out in wrong channels, on irregular occasions, in his own way. The Gibeonites he destroyed, probably as a remnant of the ancient Canaanites, heedless of the covenant which their ancestors had made with Joshua.² The wizards³ and necromancers he cut off, unmindful, till reminded by the Prophet, that his own wilfulness was as the sin of witchcraft, and his own stubbornness as the sin of idolatry. The priesthood of Nob he swept away, perhaps in the mere rage of disappointment, or under the overweening influence of Doeg, but also, it may be, as an instrument of Divine vengeance on the accursed house of Ithamar.⁴

Out of these conflicting elements, — out of a character unequal to his high position, — out of the zeal of a partial conversion degenerating into a fanciful and gloomy superstition, arose the first example of what has been called in after-times religious madness. The unhingement of his mind, which is perhaps first apparent in the wild vow or fixed idea which doomed his son to death, gradually becomes more and more evident. He is not wholly insane. The lucid intervals are long, the dark hours are few, but we trace step by step the gradual advance of the fatal malady. "The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul; and an

¹ Arnold, *On the Christian Duty of conceding the Roman Catholic Claims* (*Miscell. Works*, p. 76).

² 2 Sam. xxi. 2. See Lecture XI.

³ 1 Sam. xxviii. 9 (Ewald, iii. 67).

⁴ "Thou and all thy father's house,"

1 Sam. xxii. 16. Josephus (*Ant.* vi. 12, § 7) regards it as the climax of guilt, brought on by despotic power.

“evil spirit from the Lord troubled him — terrified, “choked¹ him.” It was an evil spirit; and yet it seemed — it is expressly called — “a spirit of God;” and in the midst of his ravings, the old Prophetic inspiration of his better days² could return — “he prophesied.”

How touching is the entrance on the scene of the one man who could charm away the demon of madness, the one bright spirit in the gloomy court, the one who finds favor in his sight; and yet the one who ministers, in spite of himself, to the waywardness of the diseased mind, which he was called in to cure, himself the victim of the love which a distempered imagination turned into jealousy and hatred.

“And Saul’s servants said unto him, Behold now, an “evil spirit from God troubleth thee. Let our “lord now command thy servants, which are be-
Saul and David.
 “fore thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player “on a harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil “spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with “his hand, and thou shalt be well. And Saul said unto “his servants, Provide me now a man that can play “well, and bring him to me. Then answered one of³ “the young men and said, Behold, I have seen a son of “Jesse the Beth-lehemite, that is cunning in playing, “and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and “prudent in speech, and a comely person, and the Lord “is with him.” From this time forth the history of the two is indissolubly united. In his better moments Saul

¹ ἐπνίγειν, 1 Sam. xvi. 14. πνίγμους αὐτῷ καὶ στραγγάλας ἐπιφέροντα (Joseph. *Ant.* vi. 8, § 2).

² Compare also the double meaning of “prophesying,” 1 Sam. xviii. 10, 11. (See Joseph. *Ant.* vi. 11, § 5.)

³ According to the Jewish tradition this was Doeg, who did it with malicious foresight of the result (Jerome, *Quæst. Heb.* in loc.).

never lost the strong affection which he had contracted for David. He "loved him greatly."¹ "Saul would "let him go no more home to his father's house."² "Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat?"³ They sit side by side, the likenesses of the old system passing away, of the new system coming into existence. Saul, the warlike chief, his great spear always by his side, reluctant, moody, melancholy and David, the youthful minstrel, his harp in his hand, fresh from the schools where the spirit of the better times was fostered, pouring forth to soothe the troubled spirit of the King the earliest of those strains which have soothed the troubled spirit of the whole world. Saul is refreshed and is well, and the evil spirit departs from him. And then, again, the paroxysm of rage and jealousy returns. Wherever he goes he is alternately cheered and maddened by the same rival figure. By David he is delivered from the giant Philistine, and by the songs of triumph over David's success he is turned against him. He dismisses him from his court, he throws him into dangers; but David's disgrace and danger increase his popularity. He makes the marriage with his daughter a trap for David, and commands his son to kill him; and his design ends in Michal's passionate love, and in Jonathan's faithful friendship. He pursues him over the hills of Judah, and he finds that he has been unconsciously in his enemy's power and spared by his enemy's generosity; and with that ebb and flow of sentiment so natural, so true, so difficult to square with any precise theories of predestination or reprobation, yet so important as indications of a living human character—the old fatherly feeling towards David revives. "Is this thy voice, my

¹ 1 Sam. xvi. 21.

² Ibid. xviii. 2.

³ Ibid. xx. 27.

“son David? And he lifted up his voice and wept. I “have sinned. Return, my son David: behold, I have “played the fool, and erred exceedingly. Blessed be “thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, “and also shalt still prevail. David went on his way, “and Saul returned to his place.”¹ So they part on the hills of Judah. One support was still left to the house of Saul. David we shall track elsewhere. The love of Jonathan for David we shall have occasion to follow in David’s history. But we do not, perhaps, sufficiently appreciate the devotion of Jonathan for his unfortunate father. From the time that he first appears he is Saul’s constant companion. He is always present at the royal table. He holds the office afterwards known as that of “the king’s friend.”² The deep attachment of the father and the son is everywhere implied. Jonathan can only go on his dangerous expedition by concealing it from Saul.³ Saul’s vow is confirmed, and its tragic effect deepened by his feeling for Jonathan — “though it be Jonathan my son.”⁴ Jonathan cannot bear to believe his father’s enmity to David. “My father will do nothing, great or small, but “that he will show it me: and why should my father “hide this thing from me? it is not⁵ so.” To him, if to any one, the frenzy of the king was amenable. “Saul “hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan.”⁶ Once only was there a decided break⁷ — a disclosure, as it would seem, of some dark passage in the previous history of Ahinoam or of Rizpah, — “Son of a perverse, rebellious “woman! Shame on thy mother’s nakedness!” “In

¹ 1 Sam. xxiv. 16; xxvi. 17–25.

² Ibid. xx. 25; 2 Sam. xv. 37.

³ 1 Sam. xiv. 1.

⁴ Ibid. xiv. 39.

⁵ Ibid. xx. 2.

⁶ Ibid. xix. 6.

⁷ Ibid. xx. 30, 31.

“fierce anger”¹ Jonathan left the royal presence. But now that the final parting was come, he took his lot with his father’s decline, not with his friend’s rise — and “in death they were not divided.”

The darkness, indeed, gathered fast and deep over the fated house.

The Philistines, so long kept at bay, once more broke into the Israelite territory. From the five cities they advanced far into the land. They had been driven from the hills of Judah. They now summoned all their strength for a last struggle in the plain of Esdraelon, where their chariots² and horses could move freely. On the central branch of the plain, on the southern slope of the range called the Hill of Moreh, by the town of Shunem, they pitched their camp. On the opposite side, on the rise of Mount Gilboa, was the Israelite army, keeping as usual to the heights which were their security. It was as nearly as possible where Gideon’s camp had been pitched against the Midianites, hard by the spring³ which from the “fear and trembling” of Gideon’s companions had been called the spring of Harod, or “trembling.” We know not what may have been the feeling of the army at this second like conjuncture. But there was no Gideon to lead them. Saul, (we are told, with a direct allusion to the incident which had given its name to the place,) “when he saw the camp of the Philistines, was afraid, “and his heart *trembled exceedingly*.”⁴ “The Spirit of the “Lord,” which had roused him in his former years, had now departed from him. There was now no harp of the shepherd Psalmist to drive away the evil spirit; and “when he inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered

¹ 1 Sam. xx. 34.

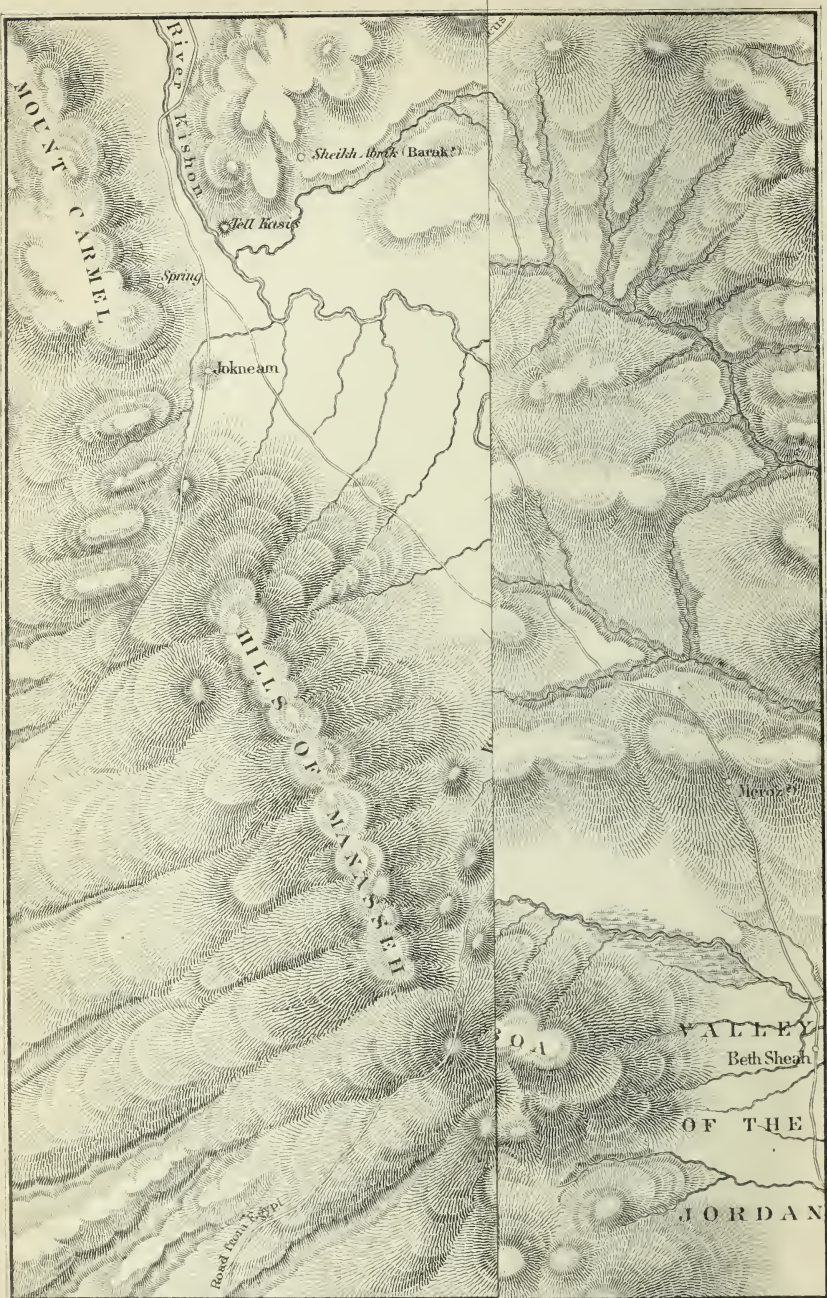
² 2 Sam. i. 6.

³ 1 Sam. xxix. 1; Judg. vii. 1, 3.

⁴ 1 Sam. xxviii. 5.

THE PLAIN OF ESDRAELON.





“him not;” no vision was vouchsafed to him in trance or dream, as before, when he lay under the Prophetic influence all night at Ramah; no intimation of the Divine will by the Urim and Thummim of the High-Priest’s breastplate, for the house of Ithamar had been exterminated by the sword of Doeg, and its sole survivor, Abiathar, was following the fortunes of his fugitive rival; no consoling voice of the Prophets of God, for Samuel, his ancient counsellor, had long since parted from him, and had descended in mourning to his grave. He was left alone to himself; and now the last spark of life, — the religious zeal which he had followed even to excess, — this also vanished; or rather, as must always be the case when it has thus swerved from the moral principle which alone can guide it, was turned into a wild and desperate superstition. The wizards and familiar spirits, whom in a fit perhaps of righteous indignation he had put out of the land, now become his only resource.

Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo.

On the other side of the ridge, on which the Philistines were encamped, was Endor, “the spring of Dor,” marked in Hebrew poetry as the scene of the slaughter of the fugitive host of Sisera.¹ On that rocky mountain-side dwelt a solitary woman — according to Jewish² tradition, the mother of Abner —

The witch
of Endor.

¹ Ps. lxxxiii. 10. See Lecture XIV.

² Jerome, *Qu. Heb.* ad loc. Volumes have been written on the question, whether in the scene that follows we are to understand an imposture or a real apparition of Samuel. Eustathius and most of the Fathers take the former view; Origen, the latter view. Augustine wavers. (See Leo Allatius,

De Engastrimytho, in *Critici Sacri*, vol. ii.) The LXX. of 1 Sam. xxviii. 7 (ἐγγαστρίμυθος) and the A. V. (by its omission of “himself” in xxviii. 14, and insertion of “when” in xxviii. 12) lean to the former. Josephus (who pronounces a glowing eulogy on the woman, *Ant.* vi. 14, §§ 2, 3), and the LXX. of 1 Chr. x. 13, to the lat-

who had escaped the King's persecution. To her, as to one who still held converse with the other world, came by dead of night three unknown guests, of whom the chief called upon her to wake the dead Samuel from the world of shades, which at that time formed the utmost limit of the Hebrew conceptions of the state beyond the grave. They were Saul, and, according to Jewish tradition, Abner and Amasa.¹ The sacred narrative does not pretend to give us the distinct details of the scene.² But we hear the shriek of double surprise, with which "when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a "loud voice;" we see with her the venerable figure, rising from the earth, like a God,³ his head veiled in his regal⁴ or sacred mantle, with the threatening and disquieted countenance which could only be, as she surmised, assumed against his ancient enemy. How different from that joyous meeting at the feast at Ramah, when the Prophet told him that on him was all the desire of Israel, on him and on his father's house. How different from that "chosen" and "goodly" youth, to whom "there was none like among the people," was the unhappy king, who, when he heard the Prophet's judgment, fell and lay "the whole length⁵ of his gigantic

ter. At this distance of time it is impossible to determine the exact intention of the narrative, though its obvious meaning tends to the hypothesis of some kind of apparition.

¹ Meyer, notes to the *Seder Olam*, p. 492.

² The witch is called in the Hebrew a woman of "Ob," i. e. of a skin or bladder, or murmuring voice, which the LXX. have rendered *ἐγγαστρίωνος* (*ventriloquist*), and the Vulgate *Pythoiness*. It is a curious instance of the dangers of relying on the trans-

lation, even of the most highly authorized version, that Voltaire (*Phil. of Hist.* 35) argues from the expression *Pythoiness* the *Grecian* origin of the whole story.

³ 1 Sam. xxviii. 13 (Hebrew). See Lecture XVIII. pp. 392, 404.

⁴ *ἱερατικὴν διπλοῖδα*, Joseph. *Ant.* vi. 14, § 2. See Lecture XVIII., *ibid*.

⁵ 1 Sam. xxviii. 20. So (as in 1 Sam. xvi. 7, the height of his stature) should be translated the words which are rendered — "all along." As in Homer, *μέγας μεγαλωστί*.

“stature upon the earth, and was sore afraid, and there “was no strength left in him.”

It was on the following day that the Philistines charged the Israelite army, and drove them up the heights of Gilboa! On “the high places of Gilboa,” on their own familiar and friendly high places, “the pride “of Israel was slain.”¹ On the green strip which breaks the slope of the mountain upland as it rises from the fertile plain, the final encounter took place. Filled as it seemed to be with the pledge of future harvests and offerings, henceforth a curse might well be called to rest upon it, and the bareness of the bald mountain, without dew or rain, to spread itself over the fertile soil.

The details of the battle are but seen in broken snatches, as in the short scenes of a battle acted on the stage, or beheld at remote glimpses by an accidental spectator. But amidst the shower of arrows from the Philistine archers—or pressed hard even on the mountain side by their charioteers²—the figure of the King emerges from the darkness. His three sons³ have fallen before him. His armor-bearer lies dead beside him. But on his own head is the royal crown—on his arm the royal bracelet. The shield or light buckler which he always wore has been cast away in his flight,⁴ stained with blood, begrimed with filth; the polish of the consecrated oil was gone—it was a defiled polluted thing.⁵ The huge spear is still in his hand. He is leaning heavily upon it; he has received his death wound either from the enemy,⁶ or from his own sword; the dizziness and dark-

The battle.

¹ 2 Sam. i.

⁵ 2 Sam. i.

² 1 Sam. xxxi. 3; 2 Sam. i. 6.

⁶ 1 Sam. xxxi. 3, 4 (LXX.). The accounts vary.

³ Ibid. 2.

⁴ 2 Sam. i. 21.

ness of death¹ is upon him. At that moment a wild

Amalekite,² lured probably to the field by the

His death. hope of spoil, came up and finished the work which the arrows of the Philistines and the sword of Saul himself had all but accomplished.

The Philistines when the next day dawned found the corpses of the father and of his three sons. The tidings were told in the capital of Gath, and proclaimed through the streets of Ashkelon; the daughters of the Philistines, the daughters of the accursed race of the uncircumcised, rejoiced as they welcomed back their victorious kinsmen. It was the great retribution for the fall of their champion of Gath. As the Israelites had then carried off his head and his sword as trophies to their sanctuary, so the head of Saul was cut off and fastened in the temple of Dagon at Ashdod,³ and his arms — the spear on which he had so often rested — the sword and the famous bow of Jonathan — were sent round in festive processions to the Philistine cities, and finally deposited in the temple of Ashtaroth, in the Canaanitish city of Bethshan, hard by the fatal field. On the walls of the same city, overhanging the public place in front of the gates, were hung the stripped and dismembered corpses.

In the general defection, the trans-Jordanic territory remained faithful to the fallen house. One town especially, Jabesh-Gilead, whether from its ancestral connection with the tribe of Benjamin, or from its recollection of Saul's former services, immediately roused itself to show its devotion. The whole armed population rose, crossed the Jordan at dead of night, and carried off the

¹ 2 Sam. i. 9 (LXX.).

³ 1 Chr. x. 10; 1 Sam. xxxi. 9,

² A son of Doeg (Jerome, *Quæst.* 10. *Heb.* in loc.).

bodies of the king and princes from Bethshan. There was a conspicuous tree — whether terebinth or tamarisk¹ — close beside the town. Underneath it the bones were buried with a strict funeral fast of seven days.² The court and camp of Saul rallied round the grave of their master beyond the Jordan, under the guidance of Abner, who set up the royal house at the ancient Eastern sanctuary of Mahanaim. Ish-bosheth was the nominal head.³ He succeeded not as in ^{Ish-bosheth.} the direct descent, but according to the usual law of Oriental succession, as the eldest survivor of the house. Thither also came Rizpah, the Canaanite concubine of Saul, with her two sons.⁴ There also were the two princesses — Michal with her second husband, Merab with her five sons, and her husband Adriel, himself a dweller in those parts, the son, perhaps, of the great Barzillai.⁵ Thither was brought the only son of Jonathan, Mephibosheth. He was then but a child in his nurse's arms. She, on the first tidings of the fatal rout of Gilboa, fled with the child on her shoulder. She stumbled and fell, and the child carried the remembrance of the disaster to his dying day, in the lameness of both his feet. He too was conveyed beyond the Jordan, and brought up in the house of a powerful Gileadite chief, bearing the old trans-Jordanic name of Machir.⁶

On the hills of Gilead, the dynasty thus again struck root, and Abner gradually regained for it all the north of Western Palestine. But this was only for a time. An unworthy suspicion of Ish-bosheth that his mighty

¹ The latter is stated in 1 Sam. xxxi. 13, the former in 1 Chr. x. 12.

² 1 Sam. xxxi. 13; 1 Chr. x. 12.

³ 2 Sam. ii. 8.

⁴ Ibid. iii. 7; xxi. 8.

⁵ Ibid. iii. 13; xxi. 8.

⁶ Ibid. ix. 4.

kinsman, by attempting to win for himself the widowed Rizpah, was aspiring to the throne, drove that high-spirited chief into the court of David, where he fell by the hand of Joab.

The slumbering vengeance of the Gibeonites for Murder of Ish-bosheth. Saul's onslaught on them, completed the work of destruction. In the guard of Ish-bosheth, which, like that of Saul, was drawn from the royal tribe of Benjamin, were two representatives of the old Canaanite league of Gibeon. They were chiefs of the marauding¹ troops which went from time to time to attack the territory of Judah. They knew the habits of the court and king. In the stillness of an Eastern noon, they entered the palace as if to carry off the wheat which was piled up near the entrance. The female slave by the door who was sifting the wheat had, in the heat of the day,² fallen asleep at her task. They stole in and passed into the royal bedchamber, where Ish-bosheth lay on his couch. They stabbed him in the stomach, cut off his head, made their escape all that afternoon, all that night, down the valley of the Jordan, and presented the head to David at Hebron as a welcome present. They met with a hard reception. The new king rebuked them sternly, their hands and feet were cut off, and their mutilated limbs hung up over the pool at Hebron. In the same place, in the sepulchre of Abner, the head of Ish-bosheth was buried.

But the vengeance of the Gibeonites was not yet Crucifixion of the seven sons of Saul. sated, nor the calamities of Saul's house finished. It was in the course of David's reign that a three months' famine fell on the country. A question arose as to the latent national crime which

¹ Comp. 2 Sam. iv. 2, iii. 22, where the same word (*gedūd*) is used.

² 2 Sam. iv. 5-7 (LXX.); and Josephus (*Ant.* vii. 2, § 1).

could have called forth this visitation. This, according to the oracle, was Saul's massacre of the Gibeonites. The crime consisted in the departure from the solemn duty of keeping faith with idolators and heretics, — a duty which even in Christian times has often been repudiated, but which even in those hard times David faithfully acknowledged.¹ This is the better side of this dark event. The Gibeonites saw that their day was come, and they would not be put off with anything short of their full measure of revenge. Seven of the descendants of Saul — the two sons of Rizpah, the five sons of Merab — were dragged from their retreat beyond the Jordan. Seven crosses were erected on the sacred hill of Gibeah or of Gibeon, and there the unfortunate victims were crucified. The sacrifice took place at the beginning of barley harvest, — the sacred and festal time of the Passover, — and remained there in the full blaze of the summer skies till the fall of the periodical rain in October. Underneath the corpses sate for the whole of that time the mother of two of them, Rizpah — the *mater dolorosa* (if one may use a striking application² of that sacred phrase) of the ancient dispensation. She had no tent to shelter her from the scorching sun, nor from the drenching dews, but she spread on the rocky floor her thick mourning-garment of black sackcloth, and crouched there from month to month to ward off the vultures that flew by day, and the jackals that prowled by night over the dreadful spot. At last the royal order came that the expiation was complete, and from the crosses — such is one version of the event —

¹ Ps. xv. 4. See Lecture XI.

² The verbal details of this account, in strict conformity with the Hebrew text, are suggested by Mr. Grove's graphic article on RIZPAH in the

Dictionary of the Bible. It should be said that there remains the possibility that the bodies were hung up after death.

the bodies were taken down by a descendant of the gigantic aboriginal races.¹ It would seem as if this tragical scene had moved the whole compassion of the king and nation for the fallen dynasty. From the grave beneath the terebinth of Jabesh-Gilead, the bones of Saul and Jonathan were at last brought back to their own ancestral burial-place at Zelah, on the edge of the tribe of Benjamin.

It must have been at this same time that the search was made for any missing descendants of Jonathan. In the entire extinction of the family in Western Palestine it was with difficulty that this information could be obtained. It was given by Ziba,² a former slave of the royal house. And David said, "Is there any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him the kindness of God for Jonathan's sake?" One still remained.

Mephibosheth.

Mephibosheth was beyond the Jordan, where he had been since his early flight. He must have been still a youth, but was married and had an only son. He came bearing with him the perpetual marks of the disastrous day of his escape. It would almost seem as if David had heard of him as a child from his beloved Jonathan. Feeble in body, broken in spirit, the exiled prince entered and fell on his face before the occupant of what might have been his father's throne; and David said, "Mephibosheth." And he said, "Behold thy slave." At David's table he was maintained, and through him and his son were probably preserved the traditions of the friendship of his father and his benefactor. His loyalty remained unshaken, though much contested both at the time and afterwards; and we part from him on the banks of the Jordan, where with all the signs of Eastern grief he met David on his

¹ 2 Sam. xxi. 11 (LXX.).

² 2 Sam. ix. 2.

return from the defeat of Absalom.¹ Two other descendants of the house of Saul appear in the court of David. A son² of Abner was allowed the first place in the tribe of Benjamin. A powerful³ chief of the family lived to a great old age on the borders of the tribe till the reign of Solomon. It is just possible that in the attempt of the usurper Zimri there is one last effort of the descendants of Jonathan to gain the throne of Israel.⁴

So closed the dynasty of Saul. It will have been observed how tender is the interest cherished towards it throughout all these scattered notices in the sacred narrative, — a striking proof of the contrast between our timid anxiety and the fearless human sympathy of the Biblical writers. In later ages, it has often been the custom to be wise and severe above that which is written, and in the desire of exalting David to darken⁵ the character of Saul and his family. In this respect we have fallen behind the keener discrimination which appeared in his own countrymen. Even when Abner fell, and by his fall secured the throne to David, this generous feeling expresses itself alike in the narrative and in David himself. “They buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept, and the king lamented over Abner. ‘Died ‘Abner as Nabal died?’ and all the people wept again over him.” Such, too, is the spirit of the stern rebuke to the slayer of Saul, and to the murderers of Ish-bosheth. Such is the deep pathos which runs through

¹ See Lecture XXIV.

² 1 Chr. xxvii. 2.

³ 2 Sam. xvi. 5, &c.; 1 Kings ii. 36, &c. See Lecture XXVI.

⁴ 1 Kings xvi. 9–20. Compare 1 Chr. ix. 42. See Lecture XXX.

⁵ Even S. Bernard thought that Saul and Jonathan were both lost forever. See Morrison, *Life of S. Bernard*, p. 270.

the dark story of Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. Such, too, was the Jewish tradition which regarded the misfortunes of David's descendants as a judgment on the somewhat unequal measure with which he requited the gratitude of Mephibosheth and the friendship of Jonathan. "At the same moment that David said to Mephibosheth, Thou and Ziba shall divide the land; the voice of Divine Providence said, Rehoboam and Jeroboam shall divide the kingdom:"¹ and even if the sacred writer believed in the treason of Mephibosheth, there is no word to tell us so; his crime, if there were a crime, is left, shrouded under the shade which sympathy for the fallen dynasty has cast over it.

This tender sentiment appears in the highest degree towards Saul himself. Josephus did not feel that he was failing in reverence to David, by breaking forth into enthusiastic admiration² of the patriotic devotion with which Saul rushed to meet his end. And still more remarkably is this feeling exemplified in David's lamentation after the battle of Gilboa. Its instruction rises beyond the special occasion.

Saul had fallen with all his sins upon his head, fallen in the bitterness of despair, and, as it might have seemed to mortal eye, under the shadow of the curse of God. But not only is there in David's lament no revengeful feeling at the death of his persecutor, such as that in which even Christian saints have indulged from the days of Lactantius down to the days of the Covenanters; not only is there none of that bitter feeling which in more peaceful times so often turns the heart of a successor against his predecessor; but he dwells with unmixed love on the brighter

David's lament over Saul and Jonathan.

¹ Quoted by Lightfoot, *Sermon on* ² *Ant.* vi. 14, § 4.

² *Sam.* xix. 29.

recollections of the departed. He speaks only of the Saul of earlier times,—the mighty conqueror, the delight of his people, the father of his beloved and faithful friend; like him in life, united with him in death.

Such expressions, indeed, cannot be taken as deliberate judgments on the characters of Saul or of his family. But they may fairly be taken as justifying the irrepressible instinct of humanity which compels us to dwell on the best qualities of those who have but just departed, and which has found its way into all funeral services of the Christian Church, of our own amongst the rest. They represent, and they have, by a fitting application, been themselves made to express, the feelings with which in all ages of Christendom the remains of the illustrious dead, whether in peace or war, of characters however far removed from perfection, have been committed to the grave. It is not only a quotation, but an unconscious vindication of our own better feelings, when over the portal of the sepulchral chapel¹ of the most famous of mediæval heroes we find inscribed the words of David: “How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!” *Quomodo ceciderunt robusti, et perierunt arma bellica!* It was not only an adaptation, but a repetition, of the original feeling of David, when we ourselves heard the dirge of Abner, sung over the grave of the hero of our own age: “The king himself followed the bier; and the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?” Fitly has this special portion of the sacred narrative been made the foundation of those solemn strains of funeral music which will forever associate the Dead March of such celebrations with the name of Saul.

¹ Tomb of the Cid near Burgos.

And the probable mode of the preservation of David's elegy adds another stroke of pathos to the elegy itself. Jonathan was, as we have seen, distinguished as the mighty Archer of the Archer tribe. To introduce this favorite weapon of his friend into his own less apt tribe of Judah, was David's tribute to Jonathan's memory. "He bade them teach the children of Judah "the bow," and whilst they were so taught, they sang (so we must infer from the context) "the song of the "bow," — "the bow which never turned back from the "slain." By those young soldiers of Judah this song was handed on from generation to generation, till it landed safe at last in the sacred books, to be enshrined forever as the monument of the friendship of David and Jonathan. Let us listen to it as it was then repeated by the archers of the Israelite army.

The wild roe,¹ O Israel, on thy high places is slain :

How are the mighty fallen !

Tell ye it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon,

Lest there be rejoicing for the daughters of the Philistines,

Lest there be triumph for the daughters of the uncircumcised.

Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew nor rain upon you !

Nor fields of offerings ;²

For there was the shield of the mighty vilely cast away —

The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.³

So David sang of the battle on Gilboa. Then came the lament over the two chiefs, as he knew them of old in their conflicts with their huge unwieldy foes :

From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty,⁴

The bow⁵ of Jonathan turned not back,

And the sword of Saul returned not empty.

Then the stream of sorrow divides, and he speaks of

¹ See p. 11.

² See p. 32.

³ Ibid.

⁴ See Lecture XVI. p. 363, and
Lecture XXII. p. 60.

⁵ See p. 17.

each separately. First, he turns to the Israelite maidens, who of old had welcomed the king back from his victories, and bids them mourn over the depth of their loss.

Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided :
Than eagles they were swifter, than lions more strong.¹

Ye daughters of Israel weep for Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet, with delights,
Who put ornaments of gold on your apparel ; ²—
How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle !

Then, as the climax of the whole, the national sorrow merges itself in the lament of the friend for his friend, of the heart pressed with grief for the death of more than a friend—a brother ; for the love that was almost miraculous,³ like a special work of God.

O Jonathan, on thy high places thou wast slain !
I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan.
Pleasant hast thou been to me, exceedingly !
Wonderful was thy love to me, passing the love of women.
How are the mighty fallen !
And perished the weapons of war !

In the greatness and the reverse of the house of Saul is the culmination and catastrophe of the tribe of Benjamin. The Christian Fathers used to dwell on the old prediction which describes the character of that tribe,—“ Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf : in the morning he shall devour the prey, and in the evening he shall divide the spoil.” ⁴ These words well sum up the strange union of fierceness and of gentleness, of sudden resolves for good and evil, which run, as hereditary

¹ See p. 17.

² See p. 22.

³ This is the force of the word translated “wonderful.”

⁴ Gen. xlix. 27.

qualities often do run, through the whole history of that frontier clan. Such were its wild adventures in the time of the Judges; such was Saul the first king; such was Shimei, of the house of Saul, in his bitterness and his repentance; such was the divided allegiance of the tribe to the rival houses of Judah and Ephraim; such was the union of tenderness and vindictiveness in the characters of Mordecai and Esther, — if not actual descendants of Shimei and Kish, as they appear in the history of Saul, at least claiming to be of the same tribe, and reckoning amongst the list of their ancestors the same renowned names.¹

And is it a mere fancy to trace with those same Christian writers the last faint likeness of this mixed history, when, after a lapse of many centuries, the tribe once more for a moment rises to our view — in the second Saul, also of the tribe of Benjamin?² — Saul of

Saul of Tarsus. Tarsus, who, like the first, was at one time moved by a zeal not according to knowledge, with a fury bordering almost on frenzy,³ — and who, like the first, startled all his contemporaries by appearing among the Prophets, the herald of the faith which once he destroyed; but, unlike the first, persevered in that faith to the end, the likeness in the Christian Church, not of what Saul was, but of what he might have been, — the true David, restorer and enlarger of the true kingdom of God upon earth.

¹ Esth. ii. 5; viii. 6, 7.

² Philippians iii. 5.

³ Acts xxvi. 11.

DAVID.



- XXII. THE YOUTH OF DAVID.
- XXIII. THE REIGN OF DAVID.
- XXIV. THE FALL OF DAVID.
- XXV. THE PSALTER OF DAVID.

SPECIAL AUTHORITIES FOR THE LIFE OF DAVID.



I. The original contemporary authorities: —

1. The Davidic portion of the Psalms, including such fragments as are preserved to us from other sources, viz. 2 Sam. i. 19–27, iii. 33, 34, xxii. 1–51, xxiii. 1–7.¹
2. The “Chronicles” or “State-papers” of David (1 Chr. xxvii. 24), and the original works of Samuel, Gad, and Nathan (1 Chr. xxix. 29). These are lost, but portions of them no doubt are preserved in —

II. The narrative² of 1 Sam. xvi. to 1 Kings ii. 11; with the supplementary notices contained in 1 Chr. xi. 1 to xxix. 30.

III. The two slight notices in the heathen historians, Nicolaus of Damascus in his *Universal History* (Josephus, *Ant.* vii. 5, § 2), and Eupolemus in his *History of the Kings of Judah* (Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* ix. 30).

IV. David’s apocryphal writings, contained in Fabricius, *Codex Pseudepigraphus Vet. Test.* 905, 1000–1005: — (1) Ps. cli., on his victory over Goliath. (2) Colloquies with God, (a) on madness, (b) on his temptation, and (c) on the building of the Temple. (3) A charm against fire.

V. The Jewish traditions, which may be divided into three classes: —

1. Those embodied by Josephus, *Ant.* vi. 8 to vii. 15.
2. Those preserved in the *Quæstiones Hebraicæ in Libros Regum et Paralipomenon*, attributed to Jerome.
3. The Rabbinical traditions in the *Seder Olam*, chap. xiii., xiv., and in the comments thereon, collected by Meyer, 452–622; also those in Calmet’s *Dictionary*, under “David.”

VI. The Mussulman traditions are contained in the Koran, ii. 250–252, xxi. 80, xxii. 15, xxxiv. 10, xxxviii. 16–24, and explained in Lane’s *Selections from the Kuran*, 226–242; or amplified in Weil’s *Biblical Legends*, Eng. Tr. 152–170.

¹ The Davidic titles of the Psalms represent the Jewish tradition respecting them; they are affixed to Psalms iii. — ix., xi. — xxxii., xxxiv. — xli., li. — lxx., lxxii. — lxxxvi., ci., ciii., cviii. — cx., cxxii., cxxiv., cxxxi., cxxxiii., cxxxviii. — cxlv. Those which Ewald (in the *Dichter des alten Bundes*) pronounces to be unques-

tionably David’s, or of David’s time, are Psalms ii., iii., iv., vii., viii., xi., xv., xviii., xix., xx., xxiv., xxix., xxxii., ci., cx.

² Whether these are works by those prophets, or respecting them, is doubtful. See Mr. Twisleton’s article on the Books of Samuel, in the *Dictionary of the Bible*.

LECTURE XXII.

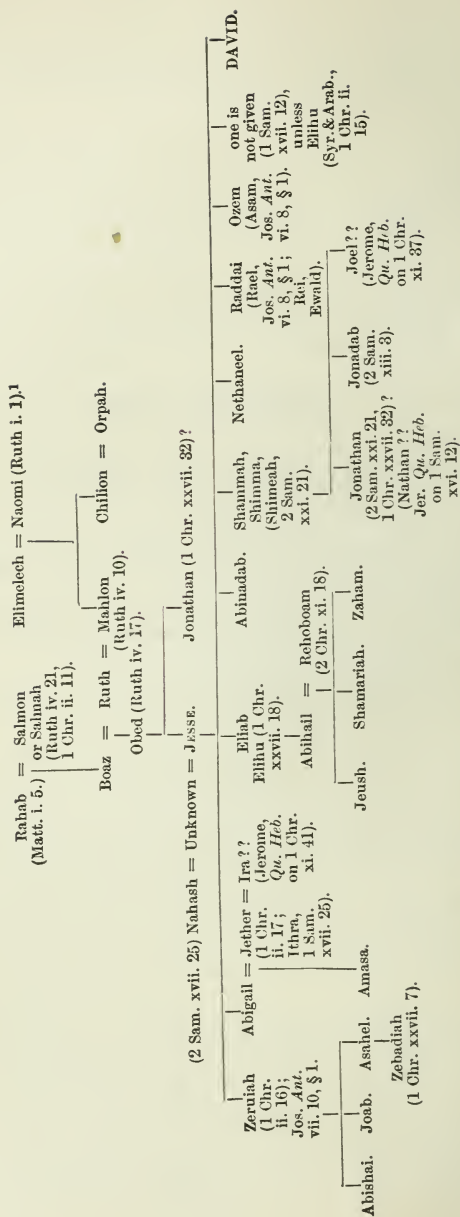
THE YOUTH OF DAVID.



The Psalms which, according to their titles or their contents, illustrate this period, are : —

- (1) For the shepherd life, Psalms viii., xix., xxiii., xxix., cli.
- (2) For the escape, Psalms vi., vii., lix., lvi., xxxiv.
- (3) For the wanderings, Psalms lii., xl., liv., lvii., lxiii., cxlii., xviii.

THE FAMILY OF JESSE.



¹ See Barrington's *Genealogies*, Table XI. The LXX. makes Mahalath (2 Chr. xi. 18) the daughter of Jerimoth and Abihail.

DAVID.

LECTURE XXII.

THE YOUTH OF DAVID.

OF all the characters in the Jewish history there is none so well known to us as David. As in the case of Cicero and of Julius Cæsar, — perhaps of no one else in ancient history before the Christian era, — we have in his case the rare advantage of being able to compare a detailed historical narrative with the undoubtedly authentic writings of the person with whom the narrative is concerned.

We have already seen the family circle of Saul. That of David is known to us on a more extended scale, and with a more direct bearing on his subsequent career. Family of David.

His father Jesse was probably, like his ancestor Boaz, the chief man of the place — the Sheikh of the village.¹ He was of great age when David Jesse. was still young,² and was still alive after his final rupture with Saul.³ Through this ancestry David inherited several marked peculiarities. There was a mixture of Canaanitish and Moabitish blood in the family, which may not have been without its use in keeping open a wider view in his mind and history than if he had been

¹ Comp. Ruth ii. 1; 1 Sam. xx. 6.

³ Ibid. xxii. 3.

² 1 Sam. xvii. 12.

of purely Jewish descent.¹ His connection with Moab through his great-grandmother Ruth he kept up when he escaped to Moab and intrusted his aged parents to the care of the king.²

He was also, to a degree unusual in the Jewish records, attached to his birthplace. He never forgot the flavor of the water of the well of Bethlehem.³ From the territory of Bethlehem, as from his own patrimony, he gave a property as a reward to Chimham, son of Barzillai;⁴ and it is this connection of David with Bethlehem that brought the place again in later times into universal fame, when "Joseph went up to Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David."⁵ Through his birthplace he acquired that hold over the tribe of Judah which assured his security amongst the hills of Judah during his flight from Saul, and during the early period of his reign at Hebron; as afterwards at the time of Absalom it provoked the jealousy of the tribe at having lost their exclusive possession of him. The Mussulman traditions represent him as skilled in making hair-cloths and sack-cloths, which, according to the Targum, was the special occupation of Jesse, which Jesse may in turn have derived from his ancestor Hur, the first founder, as was believed, of the town, — "the father of Bethlehem."⁶

The origin and name of his mother is wrapt⁷ in mystery. It would seem almost as if she had been the wife or concubine⁸ of Nahash, and then

Mother of
David.

¹ Such is probably the design of the express mention of Rahab and Ruth in the genealogy in Matt. i. 5.

² 1 Sam. xxii. 3.

³ 1 Chr. xi. 17.

⁴ 2 Sam. xix. 37, 38; Jer. xli. 17.

⁵ Luke ii. 4.

⁶ See Exod. xxxi. 2; 1 Chr. iv. 5;

and articles on BETHLEHEM and JAARE-OREGIM, in *Dict. of Bible*.

⁷ Zeruiah and Abigail, though called in 1 Chr. ii. 16 sisters of David, are not expressly called the daughters of Jesse; and Abigail, in 2 Sam. xvii. 25, is called the daughter of Nahash.

⁸ The later rabbis represent David

married by Jesse. This would agree with the fact, that her daughters, David's sisters, were older than the rest of the family, and also (if Nahash was the same as the king of Ammon) with the kindnesses which David received first from Nahash, and then from Shobi his son.¹

As the youngest of the family he may possibly have received from his parents the name, which first appears in him, of *David*,² the *beloved*, the *darling*. His brothers and nephews.

But, perhaps for this same reason, he was never intimate with his brothers. The eldest, whose command was regarded in the family as law,³ and who was afterwards made by David head of the tribe of Judah,⁴ treated him scornfully and imperiously; and the father looked upon the youngest son as hardly one of the family at all, and as a mere attendant on the rest.⁵ The familiarity which he lost with his brothers, he gained with his nephews. The three sons of his sister Zeruiah, and the one son of his sister Abigail, seemingly from the fact that their mothers were the eldest of the whole family, must have been nearly of the same age as David himself, and they accordingly were to him throughout life in the relation

as born in adultery. This is probably a coarse inference from Ps. li. 5; but it may possibly have reference to a tradition of the above. On the other hand, in the earlier rabbis we have an attempt to establish an "immaculate conception" in the ancestry of their favorite King. They make Nahash — "the serpent" — to be another name of Jesse, because he had no sin except that contracted from the original serpent; and thus David inherited none. (Jerome, *Qu. Heb.* on 2 Sam. xvii. 26, and Targum to Ruth iv. 22.)

¹ 2 Sam. x. 1; 1 Chr. xix. 1; 2

Sam. xvii. 27. Nahash in LXX., 2 Sam. xvii. 25, is *brother* of Zeruiah; Nahash king of Ammon was grandfather of Rehoboam's mother, Naamah (LXX. 1 Kings xii. 24, *i. e.* xiv. 31 Hebr.).

² The name is given in its shorter Hebrew form in the earlier books of the Old Testament, in its longer form in the later books, as also in Hosea, Amos, Canticles, and 1 Kings iii. 14. The same word in another form appears in the Phœnician Dido.

³ 1 Sam. xvii. 28; xx. 29.

⁴ 1 Chr. xxvii. 18 (LXX.)

⁵ 1 Sam. xvi. 11; xvii. 17.

usually occupied by brothers and cousins. The family burial-place of this second branch was at Bethlehem.¹ In most of them we see only the rougher qualities of the family, which David shared with them, whilst he was distinguished from them by qualities of his own, peculiar to himself. Two of them, the sons of his brother Shimeah, are celebrated for the gift of sagacity in which David excelled. One was Jonadab, the friend and adviser of his eldest son Amnon.² The other was Jonathan,³ who afterwards became the counsellor of David himself.

The first time that David appears in history, at once admits us to the whole family circle. There was a practice once a year at Bethlehem, probably at the first new moon, of holding a sacrificial feast,⁴ at which Jesse, as the chief proprietor of the place, would preside, with the elders of the town, and from which no member of the family ought to be absent. At this or such like feast⁵ suddenly appeared the great Prophet Samuel, driving a heifer before him, and having in his hand his long horn filled with the consecrated oil⁶ preserved in the Tabernacle at Nob. The elders of the little town were terrified at this apparition, but were reassured by the august visitor, and invited by him to the ceremony of sacrificing the heifer. The heifer was killed. The party were waiting to begin the feast. Samuel stood with his horn to pour forth the oil, which seems to have been the usual mode of invitation to begin a feast.⁷ He was restrained by a Divine control as son after son passed by. Eliab, the eldest, by his "height" and his

¹ 2 Sam. ii. 32.

² Ibid. xiii. 3.

³ Ibid. xxi. 21; 1 Chr. xxvii. 32.

⁴ 1 Sam. xx. 6.

⁵ Ibid. xvi. 1-3.

⁶ "*The oil*;" *ibid.* 13, and so Joseph. *Ant.* vi. 8, § 1.

⁷ Comp. 1 Sam. ix. 13, 22.

“countenance,” seemed the natural counterpart of Saul, whose successor the Prophet came to select. But the day was gone when kings were chosen because they were head and shoulders taller than the rest. “Samuel said unto Jesse, Are these all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and behold he keepeth the sheep.”

This is our first introduction to the future king. From the sheepfolds on the hill-side the boy was brought in. He took his place at the village feast, when, with a silent gesture, perhaps with a secret whisper¹ into his ear, the sacred oil was poured by the Prophet over his head. We are enabled to fix his appearance at once in our minds. It is implied that he was of short stature, thus contrasting with his tall brother Eliab, with his rival Saul, and with his gigantic enemy of Gath. He had red² or auburn hair, such as is not unfrequently seen in his countrymen of the East at the present day. His bright eyes³ are especially mentioned, and generally he was remarkable for the grace of his figure and countenance, (“fair of eyes,” “comely,”⁴ “goodly,”) well made, and of immense strength and agility. In swiftness and activity (like his nephew Asahel) he could only be compared to a wild gazelle, with feet like harts’ feet, with arms strong enough to break a bow of steel.⁵ He was pursuing the occupation usually allotted in Eastern countries to the

¹ Joseph. *Ant.* vi. 8, § 1.

² 1 Sam. xvi. 12, xvii. 42. “Ruddy” = red-haired; *πυρράκης*, LXX.; *rufus*, Vulg.: the same word as for Esau, Gen. xxv. 25. The rabbis (probably from this) say that he was like Esau. Josephus (*Ant.* vi. 8, § 1)

makes it his tawny complexion (*ξανθὸν, τὴν χροάν*).

³ 1 Sam. xvi. 12 (Heb.): *γοργὸς τὰς ὀφθαλμοῦς*, “fierce, quick,” (Jos. *Ant.* vi. 8, § 1).

⁴ 1 Sam. xvi. 18, same word as for Rachel, Gen. xxix. 17.

⁵ Ps. xviii. 33, 34.

slaves, the females, or the despised of the family.¹ He carried a switch or wand² in his hand, such as would be used for his dogs,³ and a scrip or wallet round his neck, to carry anything that was needed for his shepherd's life, and a sling to ward off beasts or birds of prey.

Such was the outer life of David, when he was "taken from the sheepfolds, from following the ewes great with young, to feed Israel according to the integrity of his heart, and to guide them by the skilfulness of his hands."⁴ The recollection of the sudden elevation from this humble station is deeply impressed on his after-life. It is one of those surprises which are captivating even in common history, but on which the sacred writers dwell with peculiar zest, and which makes the sacred history a focus of disturbing, even revolutionary, aspirations, in the midst of the commonplace tenor of ordinary life. "The man who was raised up on high." "I have exalted one chosen out of the people." "I took thee from the sheepcote."⁵ It is the prelude of simple innocence which stands out in such marked contrast to the vast and checkered career which is to follow.

Latest born of Jesse's race,
Wonder lights thy bashful face,
While the Prophet's gifted oil
Seals thee for a path of toil . . .

Go! and mid thy flocks awhile,
At thy doom of greatness smile;
Bold to bear God's heaviest load,
Dimly guessing at the road —

¹ Comp. the cases of Moses, Jacob, Zipporah, and Rachel, and in later times Mahomet (Sprenger, *Life*, p. 8).

² 1 Sam. xvii. 40. The same word as is used in Gen. xxx. 37; Jer. i. 11; Hos. iv. 12.

³ Ibid. xvii. 43.

⁴ Ps. lxxviii. 71, 72.

⁵ 2 Sam. xxiii. 1; Ps. lxxxix. 19; 2 Sam. vii. 8.

Rocky road, and scarce ascended,
 Though thy foot be angel-tended.
 Double praise thou shalt attain
 In royal court and battle-plain.
 Then comes heart-ache, care, distress,
 Blighted hope, and loneliness;
 Wounds from friend and gifts from foe,
 Dizzied faith, and guilt, and woe;
 Loftiest aims by earth defiled,
 Gleams of wisdom, sin-beguiled,
 Sated power's tyrannic mood,
 Counsels shar'd with men of blood,
 Sad success, parental tears,
 And a dreary gift of years.

Strange that guileless face and form
 To lavish on the scathing storm! . . .
 Little chary of thy fame,
 Dust unborn may praise or blame,
 But we mould thee for the root
 Of man's promis'd healing fruit.¹

But abrupt as the change seemed, there were qualities and experiences nursed even in those pastoral cares that acted unconsciously as an education for David's future career.

The scene of his pastoral life was doubtless that wide undulation of hill and vale round the village of Bethlehem, which reaches to the very edge of ^{His shepherd life.} the desert of the Dead Sea. There stood the "Tower of Shepherds."² There dwelt the herdsman Prophet Amos.³ There, in later centuries, shepherds were still "watching over their flocks by night."⁴

Amidst those free open uplands his solitary wandering life had enabled him to cultivate the gift of song and music which he had apparently ^{His minstrelsy.} ⁵

¹ *Lyra Apostolica*, lvii.

² Gen. xxxv. 21, *Edar*.

³ Amos i. 1.

⁴ Luke ii. 8.

⁵ 1 Sam. xvi. 18; xix. 18-20. See Lecture XVIII.

learned in the schools of Samuel, where possibly the aged Prophet may have first seen him. And, accordingly, when the body-guard of Saul were discussing with their master where the best minstrel could be found to drive away his madness by music, one of them, by tradition the keeper of the royal mules, suggested "a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite." And when Saul, with the absolute control inherent in the idea of an Oriental monarch, demanded his services, the youth came in all the simplicity of his shepherd life, driving before him an ass laden with bread, with a skin of wine and a kid, the natural produce of the well-known vines, and cornfields, and pastures of Bethlehem. How far that shepherd life actually produced any of the existing Psalms may be questioned. But it can hardly be doubted that it suggested some of their most peculiar imagery. The twenty-third Psalm, the first direct expression of the religious idea of a shepherd, afterwards to take so deep a root in the heart of Christendom, can hardly be parted from this epoch. As afterwards in its well-known paraphrase by Addison¹ — who found in it, throughout life, the best expression of his own devotions — we seem to trace the poet's allusion to his own personal dangers and escapes in his Alpine and Italian journeys, so the imagery in which the Psalmist describes his dependence on the shepherd-like providence of God must be derived from the remembrance of his own crook and staff, from some green oasis or running stream in the wild hills of Judea, from some happy feast spread with flowing oil and festive wine beneath the rocks, at the mouth of some deep and gloomy ravine, like those which look down through the cliffs

¹ Macaulay's *Essay on Addison*, *Edinb. Rev.* lxxviii. p. 203, 211, 259.

overhanging the Dead Sea.¹ And to this period, too, may best be referred the first burst of delight in natural beauty that sacred literature contains. Many a time the young shepherd must have had the leisure to gaze in wonder on the moonlit² and starlit sky, on the splendor of the rising sun³ rushing like a bridegroom out of his canopy of clouds; on the terrors of the storm, with its long rolling peals of thunder,⁴ broken only by the dividing flashes of the forks of lightning, as of glowing coals of fire. Well may the Mussulman legends have represented him as understanding the language of birds, as being able to imitate the thunder of Heaven, the roar of the lion, the notes of the nightingale.⁵

With these peaceful pursuits, a harder and sterner training was combined. In those early days, when the forests of southern Palestine had not been cleared, it was the habit of the wild animals which usually frequented the heights of Lebanon or the thickets of the Jordan, to make incursions into the pastures of Judea. From the Lebanon at times descended the bears.⁶ From the Jordan⁷ ascended the lion, at that time infesting the whole of Western Asia. These creatures, though formidable to the flocks, could always be kept at bay by the determination of the shepherds. Sometimes pits were dug to catch them.⁸ Sometimes the shepherds of the whole neighborhood formed a line on the hills, and joined in loud shouts to keep them off.⁹ Occasionally a single shepherd would pursue the ma-

¹ Ps. xxiii. 2, 4, 5.

² Ps. viii. 1, 3 (evidently by night).

³ Ps. xix. 1-5.

⁴ Ps. xxix. 3-9; xviii. 7-15.

⁵ *Koran*, xxi. 9, xxii. 16. Weil's *Legends*, p. 151.

⁶ Amos v. 19; 1 Sam. xvii. 34,

"The lion and the she-bear," *i. e.* the usual enemies. Comp. "the wolf," John x. 12.

⁷ Jer. xlix. 19; Zech. xi. 3.

⁸ 2 Sam. xxiii. 20; Ezek. xix. 4, 8.

⁹ Is. xxxi. 4. Comp. Herod. vi. 31.

rauder, and tear away from the jaws of the lion morsels of the lost treasure — two legs, or a piece of an ear.¹ Such feats as these were those performed by the youthful David. It was his pride to pursue these savage beasts, and on one occasion he had a desperate encounter at once with a lion and a she-bear. The lion had carried off a lamb; he pursued the invader, struck him, with the boldness of an Arab shepherd,² with his staff or switch, and forced the lamb out of his jaws. The lion turned upon the boy, who struck him again, caught him by the mane or the throat,³ or, according to another version, by the tail,⁴ and succeeded in destroying him. The story grew as years rolled on, and it was described in the language of Eastern⁵ poetry how he played with lions as with kids, and with bears as with lambs.

These encounters developed that daring courage which already in these early years had displayed itself against the enemies of his country. For such exploits as these he was, according to one version of his life, already known to Saul's guards; and, according to another, when he suddenly appeared in the camp, his elder brother immediately guessed that he had left the sheep in his ardor to see the battle.⁶ The Philistine garrison⁷ fixed in Bethlehem may have naturally fired the boy's warlike spirit, and his knowledge of the rocks and fastnesses of Judea may have given him many an advantage over them.⁸

¹ Amos iii. 12.

² See Thevenot, *Voyage de Levante*, ii. 13; quoted by Thenius on 1 Sam. xvii. 35.

³ Joseph. *Ant.* vi. 9, § 3.

⁴ LXX. 1 Sam. xvii. 35 (τῆς φάρυγος).

⁵ Ecclus. xlvii. 3.

⁶ 1 Sam. xvi. 18, xvii. 28.

⁷ 2 Sam. xxiii. 14.

⁸ There is no satisfactory method of reconciling the contradictory accounts in 1 Sam. xvi. 14-23, and xvii. 12-31, 55-58. The first states that

Through this aspect of his early youth, he is gradually thrust forward into eminence. The scene of the battle which the young shepherd "came The battle of Ephes-dammim. "to see" was in a ravine in the frontier-hills of Judah, called probably from this or similar encounters Ephes-dammim, "the bound of blood." Saul's army is encamped on one side of the ravine, the Philistines on the other. A dry watercourse marked by a spreading terebinth runs between them. A Philistine¹ of gigantic stature insults the whole Israelite army. He is clothed in the complete armor for which his nation

David was made known to Saul and became his armor-bearer in consequence of the charm of his music in assuaging the king's melancholy. The second implies that David was still a shepherd with his father's flocks, and unknown to Saul. The Vatican MS. of the LXX., followed by Kennicott (who argues the question at length, *Dissertation on Hebrew Text*, 418-432, 554-558), rejects the narrative in 1 Sam. xvii. 12-31, 55-51, as spurious. But the internal evidence from its graphic touches is much in its favor, and it must at least be accepted as an ancient tradition of David's life. Horsley, but with no external authority, transposes 1 Sam. xvi. 14-23. Another explanation supposes that Saul had forgotten him. But this only solves half the difficulty, and is evidently not the intention of the narrative. It must therefore be accepted as an independent statement of David's first appearance, modified by the counter-statement already noticed.

¹ Variations in the common account are suggested by two other passages. (1.) In 2 Sam. xxi. 19, it is stated

that "Goliath of Gath, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam," was killed (not by David, but) by Elhanan of Bethlehem. This, combined with the fact that the Philistine whom David slew is usually nameless, has suggested to Ewald (iii. 91, 92) the ingenious conjecture that the name of Goliath (which is only given thrice to David's enemy, 1 Sam. xvii. 4, 23, xxi. 9) was borrowed from the conflict of the real Goliath with Elhanan, whose Bethlehemite origin has led to the confusion. Jerome (*Qu. Heb. ad loc.*) makes Elhanan the same as David. But see ELHANAN in the *Dict. of the Bible*. (2.) In 1 Chron. xi. 12, Eleazar (or more probably Shammah, 2 Sam. xxiii. 11) is said to have fought with David at Ephes-dammim against the Philistines. It is of course possible that the same scene may have witnessed two encounters between Israel and the Philistines; but it may also indicate that David's first acquaintance with Eleazar, afterwards one of his chief captains (2 Sam. xxiii. 9), was made on this memorable occasion.

was renowned, which is described piece by piece, as if to enhance its awful strength, in contrast with the defencelessness of the Israelites. No one can be found to take up the challenge. The King sits in his tent in moody despair. Jonathan, it seems, is absent. At this juncture David appears in the camp, sent by his father with ten loaves and ten slices of milk-cheese fresh from the sheepfolds, to his three eldest brothers, who were there to represent their father detained by his extreme age. Just as he comes to the circle of wagons which formed, as in Arab settlements, a rude fortification round the Israelite camp,¹ he hears the well-known shout of the Israelite war-cry. "The shout of a king is among them."² The martial spirit of the boy is stirred at the sound; he leaves his provisions with the baggage-master, and darts to join his brothers (like one of the royal messengers³) into the midst of the lines.⁴ There he hears the challenge, now made for the fortieth time, — sees the dismay of his countrymen, — hears the reward proposed by the king, — goes with the impetuosity of youth from soldier to soldier talking of the event, in spite of his brother's rebuke, — he is introduced to Saul, — he undertakes the combat.

It is an encounter which brings together in one brief space the whole contrast of the Philistine and Israelite warfare. On the one hand is the huge giant, of that race or family, as it would seem, of giants which gave to Gath a kind⁵ of grotesque renown; such as in David's after-days still engaged the prowess of his followers, —

¹ 1 Sam. xvii. 20; xxvi. 7, A. V.
"trench."

² Comp. Num. xxiii. 21; Josh. vi.
5; Judg. vii. 20.

³ 1 Sam. xvii. 22. The same word
is used as in xxii. 17.

⁴ As in 1 Sam. iv. 16, 2 Sam. xviii.
22.

⁵ Josh. xi. 22; 2 Sam. xxi. 20, 22.
Compare the speech of Harapha in
Milton's *Samson Agonistes*.

monsters of strange appearance, with hands and feet of disproportionate development. He is full of savage¹ insolence and fury; unable to understand how any one could contend against his brute strength and impregnable panoply; the very type of the stupid "Philistine," such as has in the language of modern Germany not unfitly identified the name with the opponents of light and freedom and growth.² On the other hand is the small agile youth, full of spirit and faith; refusing the cumbrous brazen helmet, the unwieldy sword and shield, — so heavy that he could not walk with them, — which the King had proffered; confident in the new³ name of the "Lord of Hosts," — the God of Battles, — in his own shepherd's sling, — and in the five pebbles which the watercourse of the valley had supplied as he ran through it on his way to the battle.⁴ A single stone was enough. It penetrated the brazen helmet. The giant fell on his face, and the Philistine army fled down the pass and were pursued even within the gates⁵ of Ekron and Ascalon. Two trophies long remained of the battle, — the head and the sword of the Philistine. Both were ultimately deposited at Jerusalem; but meanwhile were hung up behind the ephod in the Tabernacle at Nob.⁶ The Psalter is closed⁷ by a psalm, preserved only in the Septuagint, which, though prob-

¹ According to the Chaldee Paraphrast, he declares himself the conqueror and slayer of Hophni and Phineas.

² *Philisterei*.

³ See Lecture XXIII.

⁴ For the Mussulman legend, see Weil's *Legends*, p. 153.

⁵ 1 Sam. xvii. 53 (LXX.).

⁶ 1 Ibid. xvii. 54. The mention of Jerusalem may be either an antici-

pation of the ultimate deposition of these relics in his Sacred Tent there,

2 Sam. vi. 17, or a description of the Tabernacle at Nob close to Jerusalem, where the sword is mentioned, 1 Sam. xxi. 9.

⁷ Ps. cli. (LXX.) Ps. cxliv., though by its contents of a much later date, is by the title in the LXX. also "against Goliath."

ably a mere adaptation from the history, well sums up this early period of his life: "This is the psalm of David's own writing, and outside the number, when he fought the single combat with Goliath." — "I was small amongst my brethren, and the youngest in my father's house. I was feeding my father's sheep. My hands made a harp, and my fingers fitted a psaltery. And who shall tell it to my Lord? He is the Lord, He heareth. He sent his messenger and took me from my father's flocks, and anointed me with oil of His anointing. My brethren were beautiful and tall, but the Lord was not well pleased with them. I went out to meet the Philistine, and he cursed me by his idols. But I drew his own sword and beheaded him, and took away the reproach from the children of Israel."

The victory over Goliath had been a turning-point of David's career. The Philistines henceforth regarded him as "the king¹ of the land" when they heard the triumphant songs of the Israelitish women, which announced by the vehemence of the antistrophic response² that in him Israel had now found a deliverer mightier even than Saul. And in those songs, and in the fame which David thus acquired, was laid the foundation of that unhappy jealousy of Saul towards him, which, mingling with the king's constitutional malady, poisoned his whole future relations to David.

It would seem that David was at first in the humble but confidential situation — the same in Israelite as in Grecian warfare — of armor-bearer.³ He then rose

¹ 1 Sam. xxi. 11.

² Ibid. xviii. 7 (Heb.). Of these and of like songs, Bunsen (*Bibelwerk*, Pref. cl.) interprets the expression in 2 Sam. xxii. 1, not "the sweet singer

of Israel," but "the darling of the songs of Israel." See Fabricius, *Cod. Pseudep. V. T.* 906.

³ 1 Sam. xvi. 21; xviii. 2.

rapidly to the rank of captain over a thousand, — the subdivision of a tribe,¹ — and finally was raised to the high office of captain of the king's body-guard,² second only to Abner, the captain of the host, and Jonathan, the heir apparent. He lived in a separate house, probably on the town wall,³ furnished, like most of the dwellings of Israel in those early times, with a figure⁴ of a household genius, which gave to the place a kind of sanctity of its own.

His high place is indicated also by the relation in which he stood to the other members of the royal house. Merab and Michal were successively designed for him. There is a mystery hanging over the name and fate of Merab.⁵ But it seems that she was soon given away to one of the trans-Jordanic friends of the house of Saul. Michal herself became enamored of the boyish champion, and with her, at the cost of an hundred Philistine lives, counted in the barbarous fashion of the age, David formed his first great marriage, and reached the very foot of the throne.

More close, however, than the alliance with the royal house by marriage was the passionate friendship conceived for him by the Prince Jonathan: His friendship with Jonathan. the first Biblical instance of such a dear companionship as was common in Greece, and has been since in Christendom imitated, but never surpassed, in modern works of fiction. "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the "soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own "soul."⁶ Each found in each the affection that he

¹ 1 Sam. xviii. 13.

² Ibid. xx. 25, xxii. 14, as explained by Ewald, iii. 98.

³ 1 Sam. xix. 11, 12.

⁴ Ibid. 13; comp. Judg. xvii. 5.

⁵ In the Vatican MS. of the LXX.

her whole story (1 Sam. xviii. 17–19) is omitted; and in the Hebrew text of 2 Sam. xxi. 8, the name of her sister Michal appears to have been substituted for hers.

⁶ 1 Sam. xviii. 1; 2 Sam. i. 26.

found not in his own family. No jealousy of future eminence ever interposed. "Thou shalt be king in Israel, and I shall be next to thee." By the gift of his royal mantle,¹ his sword, his girdle, and his famous bow, the Prince on his very first interview confirmed the compact which was to bind them together as by a sacramental union.

The successive snares laid by Saul to entrap him, and the open violence into which the king's madness twice broke out,² at last convinced him that his life was no longer safe. Jonathan he never saw again except by stealth. Michal was given in marriage to another—Phaltiel, an inhabitant of the neighboring village of Gallim, and he saw her no more till long after her father's death.

The importance of the crisis is revealed by the amount of detail which clings to it. He was himself filled with grief and perplexity at the thought of the impending necessity of leaving the spot which had become his second home. His passionate tears at night, his remembrance of his encounters with the lion in the pastures of Bethlehem, his bitter sense of wrong and ingratitude,³ apparently belong to this moment. The chief agent of Saul in the attack was one of his own tribe, Cush;⁴ to whom David had formerly rendered some service. A band of armed men encircled the whole town in which David's house stood; yelling like savage Eastern dogs, and returning, evening after evening, to take⁵ up their posts, to prevent his escape. So it was

¹ 1 Sam. xviii. 4.

² The first of these (1 Sam. xviii. 9–11) is omitted in the Vatican MS. of the LXX. and by Josephus (see *Ant.* vi. 10, § 1).

³ Ps. vi. 6–8, vii. 2, 4, 6 (Ewald).

⁴ Ps. vii. 1.

⁵ Title of Ps. lix., and see verses 3, 6, 14. There are expressions in this Psalm, however (verses 5, 8, 11), which look more like allusions to the invasion of the Scythians (see Ewald, *Psalmen*, 165).

conceived, at least, in later tradition. That escape he effected by climbing out of the house-window, probably over the wall of the town. His flight was concealed for some time by a device similar to that under cover of which a great potentate of our own time escaped from prison. The statue of the household genius was put in the bed, with its head covered by a goat's-hair net;¹ and by this the pursuers were kept at bay till David was in safety. He sang of the power of his Divine Protector. The bows and arrows of the Benjamite archers were to be met by a mightier Bow and by sharper Arrows than their own; he sang aloud of His mercy in the morning; for He had been his defence and his refuge in the day of his trouble.²

He fled to Naioth (or "the pastures") of Ramah, to Samuel. This is the first recorded occasion of his meeting with Samuel since the original interview during his boyhood at Bethlehem.³ It might almost seem as if David had intended to devote himself with his musical and poetical gifts to the prophetic office, and give up the cares and dangers of public life. But he had a higher destiny still. The consecrated haunts which even over the mind of Saul exercised a momentary influence,⁴ were not to become the permanent refuge of the greatest soul of that stirring age. Although up to this time both the king and himself had thought that a reunion was possible, it now appeared that the madness of Saul became constantly more settled and ferocious, and David's danger proportionably greater. The tidings of it were conveyed to him in the secret interview

¹ So Ewald (iii. 101). The LXX. takes it to be a "goat's liver," which Josephus (*Ant.* vi. 11, § 4) represents as a device to give the motion of palpitation and breathing.

² Ps. vii. 12, 13, 17; lix. 16.

³ Ps. liv. 1.

⁴ 1 Sam. xix. 22-24.

with Jonathan, by the cairn of Ezel,¹ of which the recollection was probably handed down through Jonathan's descendants when they came to David's court.

The interview brings out all the peculiarities of Jonathan's character, — his little artifices, his love both for his father and his friend, his bitter disappointment at his father's ungovernable fury, his familiar sport of archery, under cover of which the whole meeting takes place. The former compact between the two friends is resumed, extending even to their immediate posterity; Jonathan laying such emphasis on this portion of the agreement as almost to suggest the belief that he had a slight misgiving of David's future conduct in this respect. With tender words and wild tears, the two friends parted, never again to meet in the royal home.

His refuge in the centre of Prophetic influence had been discovered. He therefore turned to another sanctuary, one less congenial, but therefore less to be suspected. On the slope of Olivet, overlooking the still unconquered city of Jerusalem, all unconscious of the future sanctity of that venerable hill, stood the last relic of the ancient nomadic times — the Tabernacle of the Wanderings, round which since the fall of Shiloh had dwelt the descendants of the house of Eli. It was a little colony of Priests. No less than eighty-five persons² ministered there in the white linen dress of the Priesthood, and all their families and herds were gathered round them. The Priest was not so ready to befriend as had been the Prophet. As the solitary fugitive, famished and unarmed, stole up the mountain-side, he met with a cold reception from the cautious and courtly Ahimelech. By a ready³ story of a secret mis-

¹ See EZEL, in *Dict. of Bible*.

² 1 Sam. xxi. 1; xxii. 18.

³ This is given somewhat differently in the Hebrew and in the LXX.

sion from Saul, and of a hidden company of attendants, he put Ahimelech off his guard; and by an urgent entreaty, it may be by a gentle flattery,¹ persuaded him to give him five loaves from the consecrated store, and the sword of the Philistine giant from its place behind the sacred vestment of the priestly oracle, and through that oracle to give him counsel for his future guidance.² It was a slight incident, as it would seem, in the flight of David, but it led to terrible results, it was fraught with a momentous lesson. As the loaves and the sword were handed to David out of the sacred curtains, his eye rested on a well-known face, which filled him with dismay. It was Doeg, the Edomite³ keeper of Saul's stables, who had in earlier years (so it was believed) chosen him as Saul's minstrel. He was for some ceremonial reason enclosed within the sacred precincts; and David immediately augured ill. On the information of Doeg followed one of those ruthless massacres with which the history of this age abounds; the house of Ithamar was destroyed, and the sanctuary of Nob overthrown. It may be that with the savage sentiment of revenge was mingled in the King's mind some pretext from the profanation of the sacred bread for common use. Jewish teachers in later times imagined that the loaves thus given became useless in the hands of the hungry⁴ fugitive. But a Higher than Saul or David selected this act of Ahimelech⁵ as the one incident in David's life on which to bestow His especial commendation; because it contained — however tremulously and

¹ 1 Sam. xxi. 5, "It is sanctified this day by the instrument," *i. e.* by him that gives it (so Thenius).

² 1 Sam. xxii. 9, 15.

³ 1 Sam. xxi. 7; xxii. 22. See Lecture XX.

⁴ Jerome, *Qu. Heb. in loc.*

⁵ Matt. xii. 3; Mark ii. 25; Luke vi. 3, 4.

guardedly expressed — the great Evangelical truth that the ceremonial law, however rigid, must give way before the claims of suffering humanity.

Prophet and Priest having alike failed to protect him, David now threw himself on the mercy of his enemies, the Philistines. They seem to have been at this time united under a single head, Achish, King of Gath, and in his court David took refuge. There, at least, Saul could not pursue him. But, discovered possibly by “the sword of Goliath,” his presence revived the national enmity of the Philistines against their former conqueror. According to one version he was actually imprisoned, and was in danger of his life;¹ and he only escaped by feigning a madness,² probably suggested by the ecstasies of the Prophetic schools: violent gestures, playing on the gates of the city as on a drum or cymbal, letting his beard grow, and foaming at the mouth.³ There was a noble song of triumph ascribed to him on the success of this plan. Even if not actually composed by him, it is remarkable as showing what a religious aspect was ascribed in after-times to one of the most secular and natural events of his life. “The angel “of the Lord encamped about him” in his prison, and “delivered him.” And he himself is described as breathing the loftiest tone of moral dignity in the midst of his lowest degradation: “Keep thy tongue from evil and “thy lips that they speak no guile. Depart from evil “and do good, seek peace and pursue it.”⁴

He was now an outcast from both nations. Israel

¹ Title of Ps. lvi.

² This is the subject of one of David's apocryphal colloquies (Fabricius, p. 1002).

³ 1 Sam. xxi. 13, LXX. Aghyle

Aga, a well-known modern Arab chief, escaped from the governor of Acre in like manner, pretending to be a mad dervish.

⁴ Ps. xxxiv. 1, 7, 21.

and Philistia were alike closed against him. There was no resource but that of an independent outlaw.¹ His first retreat was the cave of Adul-^{In the cave of Adullam.} lam, probably the large cavern not far from Bethlehem, now called Khureitûn.² From its vicinity to Bethlehem, he was joined there by his whole family, now feeling themselves insecure from Saul's fury.³ This was probably the foundation of his intimate connection with his nephews, the sons of Zeruiah. Of these, Abishai, with two other companions, was among the earliest.⁴ Besides these, were outlaws from every part, including doubtless some of the original Canaanites — of whom the name of one at least has been preserved, Ahimelech the Hittite.⁵ In the vast columnar halls and arched chambers of this subterranean palace, all who had any grudge against the existing system gathered round the hero of the coming age, the unconscious materials out of which a new world was to be formed.

His next move was to a stronghold,⁶ either the mountain afterwards called Herodium, close to Adul-^{In the hold.} lam, or the gigantic fastness afterwards called Masada, in the neighborhood of En-gedi. Whilst there, he had, for the sake of greater security, deposited his aged parents beyond the Jordan, with their ancestral kinsmen of Moab.⁷ The neighboring king, Nahash of Ammon, also treated him kindly.⁸ He was joined here by two separate bands. One was a detachment of men

¹ 1 Sam. xxii. 1—xxvi. 25.

² See Bonar's *Land of Promise*, pp. 244—247.

³ 1 Sam. xxii. 1.

⁴ 1 Chron. xi. 15, 20; 1 Sam. xxvi. 6; 2 Sam. xxiii. 13, 18.

⁵ 1 Sam. xxvi. 6. Sibbechai, who kills the giant at Gob (2 Sam. xxi.

18), is said by Josephus to have been a Hittite.

⁶ 1 Sam. xxii. 4, 5; 1 Chron. xii. 8, 16.

⁷ Ithmah the Moabite (1 Chr. xi. 46) and Zelek the Ammonite (2 Sam. xxxiii. 36) may have followed his track.

⁸ 2 Sam. x. 2.

from Judah and Benjamin under his nephew Amasa, who henceforth attached himself to David's fortunes.¹ Another was a little body of eleven Gadite² mountaineers, who swam the Jordan in flood-time to reach him. Each deserved special mention by name; each was renowned for his military rank or prowess; and their activity and fierceness was like the wild creatures of their own wild country: like the gazelles of their hills, and the lions of their forests. Following on their track, as it would seem, another companion appears for the first time, a schoolfellow, if we may use the word, from the schools of Samuel, the prophet Gad,³ who appears suddenly, like Elijah, as if he too, as his name implies, had come, like Elijah, from the hills and forests of Gad.

It was whilst he was with these little bands that a foray of the Philistines had descended on the vale of Rephaim in harvest time.⁴ The animals were there being laden with the ripe corn. The officer in charge of the expedition was on the watch in the neighboring village of Bethlehem. David, in one of those passionate accesses of homesickness, which belong to his character, had longed for a draught of water from the well, which he remembered by the gate of his native village, that precious water which was afterwards conveyed by costly conduits to Jerusalem.⁵ So devoted were his adherents, so determined to gratify every want, however trifling, that three of them started instantly, fought their way through the intervening army of the Philistines, and brought back the water. His noble

The well of
Bethlehem.

¹ 1 Chron. xii. 16-18.

² Ibid. xii. 8-15.

³ 1 Sam. xxii. 5.

⁴ 2 Sam. xxiii. 13-17; 1 Chr. xi.

15-19. See REPHAİM in *Dict. of Bible*.

⁵ See Ritter's *Palestine*, 278.

spirit rose at the sight. With a still loftier thought than that which inspired Alexander's like sentiment in the desert of Gedrosia, he poured the cherished water on the ground — "as an offering to the Lord." That which had been won by the lives of those three gallant chiefs was too sacred for him to drink, but it was on that very account deemed by him as worthy to be consecrated in sacrifice to God as any of the prescribed offerings of the Levitical ritual. Pure Chivalry and pure Religion there found an absolute union.

At the warning of Gad, David fled next to the forest of Hareth (which has long ago been cleared away) among the hills of Judah, and there ^{In the hills of Judah.} again fell in with the Philistines, and, apparently advised by Gad, made a descent on their foraging parties, and relieved a fortress of repute at that time, Keilah, in which he took up his abode until the harvest was gathered safely in. He was now for the first time in a fortified town of his own,¹ and to no other situation can we equally well ascribe what may be almost called the Fortress-Hymn of the 31st Psalm.² By this time the 400 who had joined him at Adullam³ had swelled to 600. Here he received the tidings that Nob had been destroyed, and the priestly family exterminated. The bearer of this news was the only survivor of the house of Ithamar, Abiathar, who brought with him the High-Priest's ephod, with the Urim and Thummim,⁴ which were henceforth regarded as Abiathar's special charge, and from him, accordingly, David received ora-

¹ 1 Sam. xxii. 5, xxiii. 4, 7.

³ 1 Sam. xxii. 2, xxiii. 13.

² Ps. xxxi. 2, 3, 4, 8, 20, 21 (where the metrical version of Tate and Brady has inserted "Keilah's well-fenced town").

⁴ Ibid. xxiii. 6, xxii. 20-23. Jerome, *Qu. Heb.* on the passage.

cles and directions as to his movements. A fierce burst of indignation against Doeg, the author of the massacre, traditionally commemorates the period of the reception of this news.¹

The situation of David was now changed by the appearance of Saul himself on the scene. Apparently the danger was too great for the little army to keep together. They escaped from Keilah, and dispersed, "whithersoever they could go," amongst the fastnesses of Judah.

The inhabitants of Keilah were probably Canaanites. At any rate, they could not be punished for sheltering the young outlaw. It may be, too, that the inhabitants of southern Judea retained a fearful recollection of the victory of Saul over their ancient enemies,² the Amalekites, the great trophy of which had been set up on the southern Carmel. The pursuit (so far as we can³ trace it) now becomes unusually hot.

He is in the wilderness of Ziph. Under the shade of the forest of Ziph for the last time, he sees Jonathan.⁴ Once (or twice) the Ziphites betray his movements to Saul. From thence Saul literally hunts him like a partridge, the treacherous Ziphites beating the bushes before him, or, like⁵ a single flea skipping from crag to crag before the 3000 men stationed to catch even the print of his footsteps on the hills.⁶ David finds himself driven to a fresh covert, to the wilderness

¹ Ps. lii. (title).

² See Lecture XXI. and Wright's *Life of David*, p. 108.

³ We cease to follow the events with exactness, partly from ignorance of the localities, partly because the same event seems to be twice narrated (1 Sam. xxiii. 19-24, xxvi. 1-4;

and perhaps 1 Sam. xxiv. 1-22, xxvi. 5-25).

⁴ 1 Sam. xxiii. 16.

⁵ Ibid. xxiv. 14, xxvi. 20; Heb. "one flea."

⁶ Ibid. xxiii. 14, 22 (Heb. "foot"), 24 (LXX.), xxiv. 11, xxvi. 2, 20.

of Maon. On two, if not three occasions, the pursuer and pursued catch sight of each other. Of the first of these escapes, the memory was long preserved in the name of the Cliff of Divisions, given to the rock down one side of which David climbed, whilst Saul was surrounding the hill on the other side, and whence he was suddenly called away by a panic of Philistine invasion.¹ On another occasion, David took refuge in a cave at Engedi, so called from the beautiful spring frequented by the wild goats which leap from At Engedi. rock to rock along the precipices immediately above the Dead Sea.² The hills were covered with the pursuers. Into the cavern, where in the darkness no one was visible, Saul turned aside for a moment, as Eastern wayfarers are wont, from public observation.³ David and his followers were seated in the innermost recesses of the cave, and saw, without being seen, the King come in and sit down, spreading his wide robe, as is usual in the East on such occasions, before and behind the person so occupied. There had been an augury, a prediction of some kind, that a chance of securing his enemy would be thrown in David's way.⁴ The followers in their dark retreat suggest that now is the time. David, with a characteristic mixture of humor and generosity, descends and silently cuts off the skirt of the long robe from the back of the unconscious and preoccupied King, and then ensued the pathetic scene of remonstrance and forgiveness, which shows the true affection that lived beneath the hostility of the two rivals. The third meeting (if it can be distinguished from the one just given) was again in the wilderness of Ziph. The

¹ 1 Sam. xxiii. 25-29.

² Ibid. xxiv. 1, 2.

³ Ibid. xxiv. 3, "to cover his feet."

The Oriental usage leaves no doubt as to the nature of the act intended.

⁴ 1 Sam. xxiv. 4.

King was intrenched in a regular camp, formed by the usual Hebrew fortification of wagons and baggage. Into this enclosure David penetrated by night, and carried off the cruse of water, and the well-known royal spear¹ of Saul, which had twice so nearly transfixed him to the wall in former days. The same scene is repeated as at Engedi, — and this is the last interview between Saul and David. “Return, my son David; for “I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day. . . . Blessed be thou, “my son David; thou shalt both do great things and “also shalt prevail.”²

The crisis was now passed. The earlier stage of David's life is drawing to its close. Samuel was dead, and with him the house of Ramah was extinct.³ Saul had ceased to be dangerous, and the end of that troubled reign was rapidly approaching. David is now to return to a greater than his former position, by the same door through which he left it, as an ally of the Philistine kings. We seem for a moment to find him in one of the levels of life, which like many transitional epochs have the least elevation. He comes back not as a solitary fugitive, or persecuted suppliant, but as a powerful freebooter. His 600 followers have grown up into an organized⁴ force, with their wives and families about them. He has himself established a name and fame in the pastures of Southern Judea, which showed that his trials had already developed within him some of those royal, we may almost say imperious, qualities that mark his after-life. Two wives have followed his fortunes from these regions.

David as a
freebooter.

¹ 1 Sam. xxiv. 8–22. For the Mus-
sultan legend, see Weil, p. 156.

² 1 Sam. xxvi. 7, 11, 22.

³ Ibid. 25.

⁴ Ibid. xxvii. 3, 4.

Of one, Ahinoam, we know nothing except her birth-place, Jezreel, on the slopes of the southern Carmel.¹ The other, Abigail, came from the same neighborhood, and her introduction to David opens to us a glimpse of the lighter side of his wanderings, that we cannot afford to lose; in which we see not only the romantic adventures of Gustavus Vasa, of Pelayo, of the Stuart Princes, but also the generous, genial life of the exiled Duke in the forest of Ardennes, or the outlaw of Sherwood forest.

There lived in that part of the country Nabal, a powerful chief, whose wealth, as might be expected from his place of residence, consisted chiefly of sheep and goats. The tradition preserved the exact numbers of each, 3000 of the one, 1000 of the other. It was the custom of the shepherds to drive them into the wilderness of Carmel. Once a year there was a great banquet, when they brought back their sheep for shearing, with eating and drinking, "like the feast of a king."² It was on one of these occasions that ten youths were seen approaching the hill. In them the shepherds recognized the slaves or attendants of the chief of a band of freebooters who had showed them unexpected kindness in their pastoral excursions. To Nabal they were unknown. They approached him with a triple salutation; enumerated the services of their master, and ended by claiming, with that mixture of courtesy and defiance so characteristic of the East, "whatsoever cometh to thy hand, for thy servants"³ "and for thy son David." The great sheepmaster was not disposed to recognize this new parental relation. He was notorious for his obstinacy, and his low and

¹ 1 Sam. xxv. 43; Josh. xv. 56.

² Ibid. xxv. 2, 4, 36.

³ 1 Sam. xxiv. 8. The LXX. omit these words.

cynical turn of mind. On hearing this demand, he sprang¹ up and broke out into fury: "Who is David? "and who is the son of Jesse?" The moment that the messengers were gone, the shepherds that stood by perceived the danger of their position. To Nabal himself they durst not speak. But they knew that he was married to a wife as beautiful and wise as he was the reverse. To Abigail, as to the good angel of the household, one of the shepherds told the state of affairs. She loaded her husband's numerous asses with presents, and with her attendants running before her, rode down towards David's encampment. She was just in time. At that very moment he had made the usual vow of extermination against the whole household. She threw herself on her face before him, and poured forth her petition in language which both in form and substance almost assumes the tone of poetry. The main argument rests on the description of her husband's character, which she draws with that union of playfulness and seriousness which, above all things, turns away wrath. "As his name is, so is he: Fool (Nabal) is his name and "folly is with him." She returned with the announcement that David had recanted his vow. Already the tenacious adhesion to these rash oaths had given way in² the better heart of the people. Like the nobles of Palestine at a later period, Nabal had drunk to excess, and his wife dared not communicate to him either his danger or his escape. At break of day she told him both. The stupid reveller was suddenly aroused to a sense of his folly. It was as if a stroke of paralysis or apoplexy had fallen upon him. Ten days he lingered, "and the Lord smote Nabal and he died." The memory of his death long lived in David's memory, and in his

¹ 1 Sam. xxiv. 10 (LXX.).

² See Lecture XXI. p. 19.

dirge over the noblest of his enemies, he rejoiced to say that Abner had not died like¹ Nabal. The rich and beautiful widow became his wife.²

In this new condition, David appears at the court of Achish, King of Gath. He is warmly welcomed. After the manner of Eastern potentates, Achish gave him, for his support, a city — Ziklag on the frontier of Philistia — which thus became an appanage of the royal house of Judah.³ His increasing importance is indicated by the fact that a body of Benjamite archers and slingers, twenty-three of whom are specially named, joined him from the very tribe of his rival.⁴ Possibly during this stay he may have acquired the knowledge of military organization, in which the Philistines surpassed the Israelites, and in which he surpassed all the preceding rulers of Israel.

He deceived Achish into confidence by attacking the old nomadic inhabitants of the desert frontier, and, with relentless severity, cutting off all witnesses of this deception, and representing the plunder to be from portions of the southern tribes of Israel or the nomadic tribes allied to them. But this confidence was not shared by the Philistine nobles; and accordingly when Achish went on his last victorious campaign against

¹ 2 Sam. iii. 33 (Heb. and LXX.).

² The suspicions entertained by theologians of the last century, that there was a conspiracy between David and Abigail to make away with Nabal, have given place to the better spirit of modern criticism, and Ewald enters fully into the feeling of the narrator, closing his summary of Nabal's death with the reflection that "it was not without justice regarded as a Divine judgment."

³ 1 Sam. xxvii. 6. Here we meet with the first note of time in David's life. He was settled there for a "year and four months" (xxvii. 7). But the value of this is materially damaged by the variations in the LXX. to "four months," and Joseph. (*Ant.* vi. 13, § 10) to "four months and twenty days."

⁴ 1 Chr. xii. 1-7.

Saul, David was sent back, and thus escaped the difficulty of being present at the battle of Gilboa.¹ He found that during his absence the Bedouin Amalekites, whom he had plundered during the previous year, had made a descent upon Ziklag, burnt it to the ground, and carried off the wives and children of the new settlement. A wild scene of frantic grief and recrimination ensued between David and his followers. It was calmed by an oracle of assurance from Abiathar.² It happened that an important accession had just been made to his force. On his march to Gilboa, and on his retreat, he had been joined by some chiefs of the Manassites, through whose territory he was passing. Urgent as must have been the need for them at home, yet David's fascination carried them off, and they now assisted him against the plunderers.³ They overtook the invaders in the desert, and recovered the spoil. These were the gifts with which David was now able, for the first time, to requite the friendly inhabitants of the scene of his wanderings.⁴ A more lasting memorial was the law which traced its origin to the arrangement made by him, formerly in the affair with Nabal, but now again, more completely, for the equal division of the plunder amongst the two thirds who followed to the field, and the one third who remained to guard the baggage.⁵ Two days after this victory a Bedouin arrived from the North with the news of the defeat of Gilboa. The reception of the tidings of the death of his rival and of his friend, the solemn mourning, the vent of his indignation against the bearer of the message, the pathetic lamentation that followed, which form the natural close

¹ 1 Sam. xxix. 3-11.

² Ibid. xxx. 1-8.

³ 1 Chr. xii. 19-21.

⁴ 1 Sam. xxx. 26-31.

⁵ Ibid. 25, xxv. 13.

of this period of David's life, have been already described in their still nearer connection with the life and death of Saul.¹ It is a period which has left on David's character marks never afterwards effaced.

Hence sprang that ready sagacity, natural to one who had so long moved with his life in his hand. At the very beginning² of this period of his career, it is said of him that he "behaved himself wisely,"³ evidently with the impression that it was a wisdom called forth by his difficult position,—that peculiar Jewish³ caution, like the instinct of a hunted animal, so strongly developed in the persecuted Israelites of the middle ages. We cannot fix with certainty the dates of the Psalms of this epoch⁴ of his life. But, in some at least, we can trace even the outward circumstances with which he was surrounded. In them, we see David's flight "as a bird to the mountains,"⁵—like the partridges that haunt the wild hills of southern Judah. As he catches the glimpses of Saul's archers and spearmen from behind the rocks, he sees them "bending their bows, making ready their arrows upon "the string,"—he sees the approach of those who hold no converse except through those armed, bristling bands, whose very "teeth are spears and arrows, and "their tongue a sharp sword."⁶

The savage scenery suggests the overthrow of his enemies. "They shall be a portion for the ravening

¹ 2 Sam. i. 1-27. See Lecture XXI.

² 1 Sam. xviii. 14, 30.

³ See Lecture III.

⁴ To this period are annexed by their traditional titles Psalm xi. (believed by Ewald to be David's); liv. ("When the Ziphim came and said,

Doth not David hide himself with us?"); lvii. ("When he fled from Saul in the cave"); lxiii. ("When he was in the wilderness of Judah," or Idumæa, LXX.); cxlii. ("A prayer when he was in the cave").

⁵ Ps. xi. 1.

⁶ Ps. xi. 2, lvii. 4.

“jackals.”¹ They shall “be overtaken by fire and “brimstone,² storm and tempest,” such as laid waste the cities of old, in the deep chasms above which he was wandering. His mind teems with the recollections of the “rocks and fastnesses,” the “caves and leafy “coverts” amongst which he takes refuge, — the “precipices” down which he “slips,” — the steps cut in the cliffs for him to tread in, the activity as of “a wild “goat” with which he bounds from crag to crag to escape his enemies.³

But yet more in these Psalms we observe the growth of his dependence on God, nurtured by his hairbreadth escapes. “As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed⁴ my “soul out of adversity,” was the usual form of his oath or asseveration in later times. The wild, waterless hills through which he passes, give a new turn to his longing after the fountain of Divine consolations. “O God, “thou art my God, early will I seek thee. My soul “thirsteth for thee in a barren and dry land where “no water is.”⁵ The hiding-places in which the rock arches over his⁶ head are to him the very shadow of the Almighty wings. The summary of this whole period, when he was “delivered from the hand of all his “enemies, and from Saul,”⁷ is that of one who knows that for some great purpose he has been drawn up from the darkest abyss of danger and distress. He seemed

¹ Ps. lxiii. 10.

² Ps. xi. 6.

³ Ps. xviii. 2, 31, 33, 36, 46; xxxi. 2, 3, 20.

⁴ 2 Sam. iv. 9; 1 Kings i. 29.

⁵ Ps. lxiii. 1. That this relates to his earlier wanderings, and not to the flight from Absalom, appears from the Hebrew word for “wilderness,” in the title (*midbar*).

⁶ Ps. lvii. 1.

⁷ Ps. xviii. 1. Ewald, chiefly from the apparent allusions to the alliances of foreign enemies in verses 43, 44, 45, places this Psalm at the close of David’s wars. But the special mention of Saul in the title, and the general character of the contents, seem rather to fix it to this period.

to have sunk down below the lowest depths of the sea ; and out of those depths his cry reached to the throne of God ; and, as in a tremendous thunder-storm, with storm and wind, with thunder and lightning, with clouds and darkness, God Himself descended and drew him forth. “He sent from above, He took me, He drew me “out of many waters.” The means by which this deliverance was achieved were, as far as we know, those which we see in the Books of Samuel, — the turns and chances of Providence, his own extraordinary activity, the faithfulness of his followers, the unexpected increase of his friends. But the act of deliverance itself is described in the language which belongs to the descent upon Mount Sinai or the Passage of the Red Sea. It was the Exodus, though of a single human soul, yet of a soul which reflected the whole nation. It was the giving of a second Law, though through the living tablets of a heart, deeper and vaster than the whole legislation of Moses. It was the beginning of a new Dispensation.

LECTURE XXIII.

THE REIGN OF DAVID.

The Psalms which, according to their titles or their contents, illustrate this period, are :—

- (1) For Hebron, Psalm xxvii.
- (2) For the occupation of Jerusalem, Psalms xxix., lxviii., cxxxii., xxx., xv., xxiv., xcvi. 1 Chron. xvi. 8-36, xvii. 16-27, xxix. 10-19.
- (3) For the wars, Psalms xx., xxi., cviii., cx.

THE HOUSE OF DAVID.

HIS WIVES AND HIS CHILDREN.

I. AT THE COURT OF SAUL.

Michal,
 "David's wife," 1 Sam. xix. 11, xxv. 44; 2 Sam. iii. 14
 (said to be Eglah;
 Jerome, *Qu. Heb.* on
 2 Sam. iii. 5).

II. DURING THE WANDERINGS.

Ahinoam of Jezreel (1 Sam. xxv. 43). Amnon ("his first-born").	Abigail of Carmel (xxv. 42). Chileab, or Daniel (1 Chr. iii. 1). (Jehiel, Jer. <i>Q. H.</i> on 1 Chr. xxvii. 32.)
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III. AT HEBRON (2 Sam. iii. 2-5; 1 Chr. iii. 1-4).

Maacah of Geshur. Absalom. 3 sons who died (2 Sam. xiv. 27, xviii. 18).	Tamar. Tamar = Uriel of Gibeah. Maacah = Rehoboam. or Micahiah (2 Sam. xiv. 27, 2 Chr. xiii. 2). Abijah.	Haggith. Adonijah.	Abital. Shephatiah.	Eglah, "David's wife." * Ithream.
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IV. AT JERUSALEM (2 Sam. xv. 13-16; 1 Chr. iii. 5-8, xiv. 4-7).

(1) Bathsheba or Bathshua (1 Chr. iii. 5). 							
Shammua or Shimea (1 Chr. iii. 5).	Shoba.	Nathan.	Jedidiah, or SOLOMON. Rehoboam = Maacah. Abijah.	(2) "More wives." 			
† Ibhar.	Elishua. Elishama (1 Chr. iii. 6).	Eliphelet.	Nogah.	Nepheg.	Japhia.	Elishama.	Eliada, or Beellada.
Also daughters (1 Chr. xiv. 3; 2 Sam. v. 13).							
(3) Ten (?) concubines (2 Sam. v. 13, xv. 16). 							
Jerimoth (2 Chr. xi. 18). Jerome, <i>Q. H.</i> Mahalath = Rehoboam = Abihail.				Jesse. Eliab.			

* The tradition on Eglah in Jerome (*Qu. Heb.* on iii. 5 and vi. 23) says that she was Michal; and that she died in giving birth to Ithream.

† The LXX. (Cod. Vat.) in 2 Sam. v. 16, after having given substantially the same list as the present Hebrew text, repeats the list, with strange variations, as follows:—Samae, Iessibath, Nathan, Galamaan, Iebaar, Thëesus, Elphalat, Naged, Naphek, Ianatha, Leasamys, Baalimath, Eliphaath. Josephus (*Ant.* vii. 3. § 3) gives the following list, of which only three names are identical. He states that the two last were sons of the concubines:—Amnus, Emnus, Eban, Nathan, Solomon, Iebar, Eliën, Phalna, Ennaphen, Ienaë, Eliphale; and also his daughter Thamar.

LECTURE XXIII.

THE REIGN OF DAVID.

THE reign of David divides itself into two unequal portions. The first is the reign of seven years and six months at Hebron. Hebron was Reign at Hebron. selected, doubtless, as the ancient sacred city of the tribe of Judah, the burial-place of the patriarchs, and the inheritance of Caleb. Here David was first formally anointed king, it would seem by the tribe of Judah, without any intervention of Abiathar. To Judah his reign was nominally confined. But probably for the first five years of the time, the dominion of the house of Saul, the seat of which was now at Mahanaim, did not extend to the west of the Jordan. We have already seen¹ how "David waxed stronger and stronger, and the "house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." First came the successful inroad into Ish-bosheth's territory. The single combat, the rapid pursuit, are told, however, chiefly for their connection with the fortunes of two members of David's family. That fierce chase was sadly marked by the death of his nephew Asahel, Death of Asahel. who there put to the last stretch his antelope swiftness, "turning neither to the right nor to the left" for any meaner prize than the mighty Abner. Abner, with the lofty generosity which never deserts him, chafes against the cruel necessity which forces him to slay his gallant pursuer. All the soldiers halted, struck

¹ See Lecture XXI.

dumb with grief over the dead body of their young leader. It was carried back and buried at Bethlehem, in their ancestral resting-place.

It is now that Joab first appears on the scene. He was the eldest and the most remarkable of David's nephews, who, as we have shown, stood to him rather in the relation of cousin, from the interval of age between their mother and David, her youngest brother. Asahel was the darling of his brothers, and would have doubtless won a high place amongst the heroes of his youthful uncle's army. Abishai was thoroughly loyal and faithful to David, even before the adherence of Joab, — like Joab, implacable to the enemies of the royal house; unlike Joab, faithful to the end. But Joab with those ruder qualities combined something of a more statesmanlike character, which brings him more nearly on a level with David, and gives him the second place in the whole coming history. He had lived before, it may be, on more friendly terms than the rest of his family, with the reigning house of Saul. He was at least well known to Abner.¹ It was not till after the death of Saul that he finally attached himself to David's fortunes. The alienation was sealed by the death of Asahel. To him, whatever it might be to Abishai, it was a loss never to be forgiven. Reluctantly he had forborne the pursuit after Abner. Eagerly he had seized the opportunity of Abner's visit to David, decoyed him to the interview in the gateway of Hebron, and there treacherously murdered him.² It may be that with the passion of vengeance for his brother's death was mingled the fear lest Abner should supplant him in the royal favor. He was forced to appear with all the signs of mourning at the funeral; Joab walked before the corpse,

¹ 2 Sam. ii. 22, 26.

² Ibid. iii. 27.

the king behind. But it was an intimation of Joab's power, that David never forgot. "I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too hard for me: the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness." So he hoped in his secret heart. But Joab's star was in the ascendant; he was already at the head of David's band, and a still higher prize was in store for him.

For now on the death of Ish-bosheth the throne, so long waiting for David, was at last vacant, and the united voice of the whole people at once called him to occupy it. A solemn league was made between him and his people.¹ For the second time David was anointed king, and a festival of three days celebrated the joyful event.² His little band had now swelled into "a great host, like the host of God."³ It was formed by contingents from every tribe of Israel. Two are specially mentioned as bringing a weight of authority above the others. The sons of Issachar had "understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do," and with the adjacent tribes contributed to the common feast the peculiar products of their rich territory.⁴ The Levitical tribe, formerly represented in David's following only by the solitary fugitive Abiathar, now came in strength, represented by the head of the rival branch of Eleazar, the aged Jehoiada and his youthful and warlike kinsman Zadok.⁵ There is one Psalm traditionally referred to this part of David's life.⁶ It is that which opens with the words famous as the motto of our own famous University: "The Lord is my

¹ 2 Sam. v. 3.

² 1 Chr. xii. 39.

³ Ibid. 22.

⁴ Ibid. 32, 40.

⁵ 1 Chr. xii. 27, 28, xxvii. 5.

⁶ Ps. xxvii. The LXX. gives as the title "Before the anointing."

“light;” and the courageous and hopeful spirit which it breathes, the confident expectation that a better day was at hand, whilst it lends itself to the manifold applications of our own later days, well serves as an introduction to the new crisis in the history of David and of the Jewish Church which is now at hand. It must have been with no common interest that the surrounding nations looked out to see on what prey the Lion of Judah, now about to issue from his native lair, would make his first spring.

One fastness alone in the centre of the land had hitherto defied the arms of Israel. Long after every other fenced city had yielded, the fortress of Jebus remained impregnable, planted on its rocky heights, guarded by its deep ravines, and yet capable on its northern quarter of an indefinite expansion. On this, with a singular prescience, David fixed as his new capital. The inhabitants prided themselves on their inaccessible position. Even the blind and the lame, they believed, could defend it. “David,” they said, “shall never come up hither.” Herodotus¹ compares Jerusalem to Sardis. Like Sardis it was taken, through the neglect of the one point which nature seemed to have guarded sufficiently. At once David offered the highest prize in his kingdom — the chieftainship of the army — to the soldier who should scale the precipice. Did the thought cross his mind (as in a darker hour afterwards) that he who was most likely to make the daring attempt would perish, and thus the hard yoke of the sons of Zeruiah be broken? We know not. To Joab, as we see from all his preceding and subsequent conduct, the proffered post was the highest object of ambition. With the agility so conspicuous in his family

Capture of
Jerusalem.

¹ If we may so interpret Herod. ii. 159, iii. 5.

— in Asahel his brother, and in David his uncle — he clambered up the cliff,¹ and dashed the defenders down, and was proclaimed Captain of the Host.² What became of the inhabitants we are not told. But apparently they were in great part left undisturbed. A powerful Jebusite chief, probably the king,³ with his four sons, lived on property of his own immediately outside the walls. But the city itself was immediately occupied as the capital of the new kingdom. Fortifications⁴ were added by the king and by Joab, and the city immediately became the royal residence.

From that moment, we are told, David “went on, “going and growing, and the Lord God of Hosts was “with him.” The neighboring nations were partly enraged and partly awe-struck. The Philistines made two ineffectual attacks on the new King, and a retaliation on their former victories, and on the capture of the Ark, took place by the capture and conflagration of their idols.⁵ Tyre, now for the first time appearing in the sacred history, allied herself with Israel, and sent cedar-wood for the building of the new capital.⁶ But the occupation of Jerusalem was to be of a yet greater than any strategetical or political significance.

Those only who reflect on what Jerusalem has since been to the world can appreciate the grandeur of the moment when it passed from the hands of the Jebusites, and became “the city of David.” It was to be the inauguration of that new religious develop-

¹ The “gutter;” perhaps the *port-cullis* (καταβράκτης, by which the LXX. elsewhere render the word). See Ewald, iii. 157.

² 1 Chr. xi. 6.

³ Araunah the King in 2 Sam. xxiv. 23, is elsewhere Araunah the Jebu-

site (Heb. and Ewald). The LXX. and Vulgate omit the words.

⁴ 2 Sam. v. 9; 1 Chr. xi. 8.

⁵ 2 Sam. v. 17–20; 1 Chr. xiv. 8–12.

⁶ 2 Sam. v. 11; 1 Chr. xiv. 1.

ment of the Jewish nation, which having begun with the establishment of the first King, now received the vast impulse which continued till the overthrow of the monarchy. This impulse was given by the establishment of the Ark at Jerusalem.

The Ark was still in exile. It was detained at its first halting-place, Kirjath-jearim, on the outskirts of the hills of Judah. It was to be moved in state to the new capital, which, by its reception, was to be consecrated. Unhallowed and profane as the city had been before, it was now to be elevated to a sanctity which it never lost, above all the other sanctuaries of the land. "Thy birth and thy nativity," says Ezekiel, in addressing Jerusalem, "is of the land of Canaan: thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born . . . thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all . . . thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person in the day that thou wast born."¹ This unknown, obscure heathen city was now to win the name which,

even to the superseding not only of the title of Translation of the Ark. Jebus, but of Jerusalem, it thenceforth assumed and bears to this day²—"The Holy City." At Ephratah,³ at Bethlehem, the idea of making this great transference had occurred to David's mind. The festival was one which exactly corresponded to what in the Middle Ages would have been "the Feast of the Translation" of some great relic, by which a new city or a new church was to be glorified. Long sleepless nights⁴ had David passed in thinking of it,—as St. Louis of the transport of the Crown of Thorns to the Royal Chapel

¹ Ezek. xvi. 3, 4, 5.

³ Ps. cxxxii. 6.

² *El-Khods*. Possibly the Kadytis of Herodotus (ii. 159; iii. 5).

⁴ *Ibid.* verse 4.

of Paris. Now the time was come. A national assembly was called from the extremest north to the extremest south.¹ The King went at the head of his army² to find the lost relic of the ancient religion. They "found it" in the woods which gave its name to Kirjath-jearim, "the city of the woods," on the wooded³ hill above the town, in the house of Abinadab. It was removed in the same way in which it had been brought; a car or cart, newly made for the purpose, drawn by oxen, dragged it down the rugged path, accompanied by two of the sons of Abinadab; the third, Eleazar, who had been the priest of the little sanctuary, is not now mentioned.⁴ Of these Ahio went⁵ before, Uzzah guided the cart. The long procession went down the defile with music of all kinds, till a sudden halt was made at a place known as the threshing-floor of Nachon, or Chidon;⁶ according to one tradition, the spot where Joshua had lifted up his spear against Ai; according to another, the threshing-floor of Araunah, close to Jerusalem. At this point, perhaps slipping on the smooth rock, the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah caught hold of the Ark, to save it from falling. Suddenly he fell down dead by its side. A long tradition has connected the going forth of the Ark with a terrible thunder-storm;⁷

¹ From the Orontes to the Nile (1 Chr. xiii. 5).

² Various reported as 30,000, or 700,000 (LXX.).

³ 2 Sam. vi. 3, 4, *hag-gibeah*, Auth. Vers. Gibeah.

⁴ Ibid. vi. 3. Comp. 1 Sam. vii. 1.

⁵ Ibid. vi. 4.

⁶ See the various readings of the LXX. and Hebrew, in 2 Sam. vi. 6, 1 Chr. xiii. 9, and Joseph. (*Ant.* vii. 4, § 2).

⁷ Ps. xxix. 1. No less than seven psalms, either in their traditional titles, or in the irresistible evidence of their contents, bear traces of this festival. The 29th (by its title in the LXX.) is said to be on the "Going forth of the tabernacle." As "the tabernacle" was never moved from Gibeon in David's time, "the ark" is probably meant. Chandler (*Life of David*, ii. 211) connects the thunder-storm which it describes with the

and another¹ speaks of the manner of Uzzah's death as by the withering of his arm and shoulder. Whatever may have been the mode of his death, or whatever the unexplained sin or error which was believed to have caused it, the visitation produced so deep a sensation, that, with a mixture of awe and mistrust, David hesitated to go on. The place was called "the Breaking forth," or the "Storm of Uzzah," and the Ark was carried aside into the house of a native of Gath, Obed-edom, who had settled within the Israelite territory.

After an interval of three months, David again made the attempt. This time the incongruous, unauthorized conveyance of the cart was avoided, and the Ark was carried, as on former days, on the shoulders of the Levites.² Every arrangement was made for the music, under the Levite musicians Heman, Asaph, and Ethan or Jeduthun, and Chenaniah³ "the master of the song." Obed-edom still ministered to the Ark which he had guarded. According to the Chronicles, the Priests and Levites, under the two heads of the Aaronic family,⁴ figured in vast state. As soon as the first successful start had been made, a double sacrifice was made.⁵ The well-known shout, which accompanied the raising of the Ark at the successive movements in the wilderness, was doubtless heard once more, — "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered."

death of Uzzah. Comp. Ps. lxxiii. 7-33. The others are the 15th, 24th, 30th, 68th, 132d, 141st. Fragments of poetry worked up into psalms (xcvi. 2-13, cv., cvi. 1, 47, 48) occur in 1 Chr. xvi. 8-36, as having been delivered by David "into the hands of Asaph and his brother" after the close of the festival. The two mysterious terms in the titles of Ps. vi. and xlv.

(Sheminith and Alamoith) also appear in the lists of those mentioned on this occasion in 1 Chr. xv. 20, 21.

¹ Jerome, *Qu. Heb.* on 1 Chr. xiii. 7.

² 2 Sam. vi. 13; 1 Chr. xv. 15.

³ 2 Sam. vi. 15; 1 Chr. xiii. 2, xv. 16-22, 27.

⁴ 1 Chr. xv. 11.

⁵ 2 Sam. vi. 13; 1 Chr. xv. 26.

“Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest; Thou, and the ark of “Thy strength.”¹ The priests in their splendid dresses, the two rival tribes of the South, Judah and Benjamin, the two warlike tribes of the North, Zebulun and Naphthali,² are conspicuous in the procession. David himself was dressed in the white linen mantle of the Priestly order; and, as in the Prophetic schools where he had been brought up, — and as still in the colleges of eastern Dervishes, — a wild dance formed part of the solemnity. Into this, the King threw himself with unusual enthusiasm: his heavy royal robe was thrown aside; the light linen ephod appeared to the by-standers hardly more than the slight dress of the Eastern³ dancers. He himself had a harp in his hand, with which he accompanied the dance. It may be that, according to the Psalms ascribed to this epoch, this enthusiasm expressed not merely the public rejoicing, but his personal feeling of joy at the contrast between the depth of danger — “the grave” as it seemed, out of which he had been snatched, and the exulting triumph of the present — the exchange of sad mourning for the festive dress — of black sackcloth for the white cloak of gladness.⁴ The women came out to welcome him and his sacred charge,⁵ as was the custom on the return from victory. The trumpets pealed loud and long, as if they were entering a captured city; the shout as of a victorious host rang through the valleys of Hinnom and of the Kedron, and as they wound up the steep ascent which led to the fortress. Now at last the long wanderings of the Ark were over. “The Lord hath chosen Zion; “He hath desired it for His habitation.” “This is My

¹ Ps. lxviii. 1, cxxxii. 8.

⁴ Ps. xxx. 9, 11.

² Ps. cxxxii. 9, lxviii. 27.

⁵ Ps. lxviii. 11 (Heb.), 25; 2 Sam.

³ εἰς τῶν ὀρχουμένων (LXX.).

vi. 20.

“rest for ever — here will I dwell, and delight therein.” It was safely lodged within the new Tabernacle which David had erected for it on Mount Zion, to supply the place of the ancient tent which still lingered at Gibeon.¹

It was the greatest day of David's life. Its significance in his career is marked by his own preëminent position : Conqueror, Poet, Musician, Priest, in one. The sacrifices were offered by him ; the benediction both on his people and on his household were² pronounced by him. He was the presiding spirit of the whole scene. One only incident tarnished its brightness. Michal, his wife, in the proud, we may almost say, conservative spirit of the older dynasty, — not without a thought of her father's fallen³ house, — poured forth her contemptuous reproach on the king who had descended to the dances and songs of the Levitical procession. He in reply vowed an eternal separation, marking the intense solemnity which he attached to the festival.

But the Psalms which directly and indirectly⁴ spring out of this event reveal a deeper meaning than the mere outward ritual. It was felt to be a turning-point in the history of the nation. It recalled even the great epoch of the passage through the wilderness. It awoke again the inspiriting strains of the heroic career⁵ of the Judges. Even the long lines of the Bashan hills where the first hosts of Israel had encamped⁶ beyond the Jordan, were not so imposing as the rocky heights of Zion. Even the sanctity of Sinai, with its myriads of ministering spirits, is transferred to this new and vaster

¹ 2 Sam. vi. 17 ; 1 Chr. xv. 1 ;

2 Chr. i. 3, 4.

² 2 Sam. vi. 13, 17, 18, 20 ; 1 Chr. xvi. 43.

³ 2 Sam. vi. 21.

⁴ For these see note 7, page 91.

⁵ Ps. lxxviii. 7-9 ; comp. Judges v. 4.

⁶ Ibid. 22.

sanctuary. The long captivity of the Ark in Philistia — that sad exile which, till the still longer and sadder one which is to close this period of the history, was known by the name of “*the captivity*” — was now brought to an end, “captivity was captive led.”¹ And accordingly, as the Ark stood beneath the walls of the ancient Jewish fortress, so venerable with unconquered age, the summons goes up from the procession to the dark walls in front, “Lift up your heads, O ye gates, “and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King “of Glory shall come in.” The ancient, everlasting gates of Jebus are called to lift up their heads, their² portcullis grates, stiff with the rust of ages. They are to grow and rise with the freshness of youth, that their height may be worthy to receive the new King of Glory. That glory which fled when the Ark was taken, and when the dying mother exclaimed over her newborn son, “Ichabod!”³ was now returning. From the lofty towers the warders cry, — “Who is this King of “Glory?” The old heathen gates will not at once recognize this new-comer. The answer comes back, as if to prove by the victories of David the right of the name to Him who now comes to His own again, ^{The name of the “Lord of Hosts.”} — “JEHOVAH, the Lord, the Mighty One, JEHOVAH, mighty in battle!” and again by this proud title admission is claimed: “Lift up your heads, O ye “gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the “King of Glory shall come in.” Once more the guardians of the gates reply, “Who is this King of Glory?”

¹ Ps. lxxviii. 18. In the title of the LXX., Ps. xcvi. is said to be David’s, “when the house was built after the captivity.” It is possible that by “the captivity” may be meant the captivity

of the ark in Philistia, as in Judg. xviii. 30. See Lecture XVII.

² Ps. xxiv. 7 (LXX. and Ewald).

³ 1 Sam. iv. 21, 22. See Lecture XVII.

And the answer comes back, — “JEHOVAH SABAOth, the “Lord of Hosts, *He* is the King of Glory.” This is the solemn inauguration of that great Name, by which the Divine Nature was especially known under the monarchy. As, before, under the Patriarchs, it had been known as ELOHIM, “the strong ones,” — as through Moses, it had been JEHOVAH, The Eternal, — so now, in this new epoch of civilization, of armies, of all the complicated machinery of second causes, of Church and State, there was to be a new name expressive of the wider range of vision opening on the mind of the people. Not merely the Eternal solitary existence — but the Maker and Sustainer of the host of Heaven and earth in the natural world, which, as we see in the Psalms,¹ were now attracting the attention and wonder of men. Not merely the Eternal Lord of the solitary human soul, but the Leader and Sustainer of the hosts of battle, of the hierarchy of war and peace that gathered round the court of the kings of Israel. The Greek rendering of the word by the magnificent *Pantocrator*, “all-conqueror,” passed through the Apocalypse² into Eastern Christendom, and is still the fixed designation by which in Byzantine churches the Redeemer is represented in His aspect of the Mighty Ruler of Mankind.

This great change is briefly declared in corresponding phrase in the historical narrative, which tells how “David brought up the ark of God, whose name is called “by the name of the LORD OF HOSTS that dwelleth between the cherubim; and he blessed the people in the “name of the LORD³ OF HOSTS.” This was indeed, as the

¹ See Lecture XXV. Comp. Isa. xxxi. 4, xl. 26.

² Rev. i. 8.

³ 2 Sam. vi. 2, 18, vii. 25, 26. It only occurs once before, 1 Sam. xvii. 45.

68th Psalm describes it, a second Exodus. David was, on that day, the founder not of Freedom only, but of Empire, — not of Religion only, but of a Church and Commonwealth. But there were revelations of a yet loftier kind even than this new name of the Leader of the armies of Israel. The name of the Lord of Hosts, as revealed in the close of the 24th Psalm, was destined itself to fade away into a dark silence, when the hosts had ceased to fight, and the empire of Israel had fallen to pieces. But in the hopes with which that same Psalm is opened, and which pervade the 15th and the 101st, the faith of David takes a still higher and wider sweep. As if in answer to the cry Moral requirements of David. from the guardians of the gates, as he remembers the tabernacle which he had raised within the walls of his city to receive the ark after its long wanderings, — as he sees its magnificent train mounting up to its sacred tent on the sacred rock, — the thought rises within him of those who shall hereafter be the citizens of the capital thus consecrated, and he asks, — “Who shall ascend “into the mount of Jehovah? who shall stand in His “holy place? Who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who “shall dwell in Thy holy tent?” The question is twice asked, the reply is twice given. “He that hath clean “hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his “soul unto vanity, nor sworn to deceive his neighbor.” “He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, “and speaketh the truth from his heart. He that back- “biteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his “neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neigh- “bor. He that despiseth a vile person, but honoreth “them that fear Jehovah. He that sweareth to his own “hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his “money unto usury, nor taketh reward against the

“innocent. He that doeth these things shall never “fall.”¹ Of these tests for the entrance into David’s city and David’s church, one only has become obsolete — that of not receiving usury. All the rest remain in force still; nay, it may even be said that the one qualification repeated in so many forms, of the duty of truth — even in Christian times has hardly been recognized with equal force, as holding the exalted place which David gives to it. And what he asks for the citizens of his new capital, he asks for the courtiers and statesmen of his new court. For when at length the day is past, and he finds himself in his own Palace, he there lays down for himself the rules by which “he will walk in “his house with a perfect heart.” The 101st Psalm was one beloved by the noblest of Russian princes, Vladimir Monomachos; by the gentlest of English Reformers, Nicholas Ridley. But it was its first leap into life that has carried it so far into the future. It is full of a stern exclusiveness, of a noble intolerance. But not against theological error, not against uncourtly manners, not against political insubordination, but against the proud heart, the high look, the secret slanderer, the deceitful worker, the teller of lies. These are the outlaws from King David’s court; these alone are the rebels and heretics whom he would not suffer to dwell in his house or tarry in his sight. “Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he that “walketh in a perfect way, he shall be my servant. I “will early destroy all the wicked of the land, that “I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the “LORD.”² Many have been the holy associations with which the name of Jerusalem has been invested in Apocalyptic visions and Christian hymns, but they have

¹ Ps. xv., xxi.

² Ps. ci. 6–8.

their first historical ground in the sublime aspirations of its first Royal Founder.

How far this high ideal was realized — how far lost, will be seen as we proceed through the tangled history of the court and empire of Israel.

The erection of the new capital at Jerusalem introduces us to a new era, not only in the inward hopes of the Prophet-King, but in the external ^{Empire of David.} history of the monarchy. Up to this time he had been a chief, such as Saul had been before him, or as the kings of the neighboring tribes, each ruling over his territory, unconcerned with any foreign relations except so far as was necessary to defend his own nation or tribe. But David, and through him the Israelitish monarchy, now took a wider range. He became a King on the scale of the great Oriental sovereigns of Egypt and Persia, with a regular administration and organization of court and camp; and he also founded an imperial dominion which for the first time realized the Patriarchal description¹ of the bounds of the chosen people. This imperial dominion was but of short duration, continuing only through the reigns of David and his successor Solomon. But, for the period of its existence, it lent a peculiar character to the sacred history. For once, the kings of Israel were on a level with the great potentates of the world. David was an imperial conqueror, if not of the same magnitude, yet of the same kind, as Rameses or Sennacherib. "I have made thee a great name like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth." "Thou hast shed blood abundantly and made great wars."² And as, on the one hand, the external relations of life, and the great incidents of war and conquest receive an elevation by their contact with

¹ Gen. xv. 18–21.

² 2 Sam. vii. 9; 1 Chr. xxii. 8.

the religious history, so the religious history swells into larger and broader dimensions from its contact with the course of the outer world. The enlargement of territory, the amplification of power and state, leads to a corresponding enlargement and amplification of ideas, of imagery, of sympathies; and thus (humanly speaking) the magnificent forebodings of a wider dispensation in the Prophetic writings first became possible through the court and empire of David.

The general organization of the kingdom now established, lasted to the end of the monarchy of which David was the founder.

(1.) At the head of it was the Royal Family, the House of David. The princes were under the charge of a governor named Jehiel,¹ perhaps a Levite,² except Solomon, who (according at least to one rendering) was under the charge of Nathan.³ David himself was surrounded by a royal state unknown before. He was the Chief or "Patriarch" of the dynasty.⁴ He had his own royal mule, especially known as such.⁵ He had his royal seat or throne, in a separate chamber or gateway in the palace.⁶ The highest officers of the court, even the Prophets, did not venture into his presence without previous announcement;⁷ when they did enter, it was with the profoundest obeisance and prostration.⁸ His followers, who up to the time of his accession had been called his "young men," his "companions," henceforth became his "servants," his "slaves."⁹ He had the power of dispensing even with¹⁰ the fundamental laws and usages of the Jewish commonwealth.

¹ 1 Chr. xxvii. 32.

⁷ 1 Kings i. 23.

² Ibid. xv. 21; 2 Chr. xx. 14.

⁸ 2 Sam. ix. 6, xiv. 4, 22, 33, xviii.

³ 2 Sam. xii. 25.

28, xix. 18; 1 Kings i. 16, 23, 31.

⁴ Acts ii. 29.

⁹ See article ELHANAN in the *Dictionary of the Bible*.

⁵ 1 Kings i. 33.

⁶ Ibid. 35, 46; comp. 2 Sam. xv. 2.

¹⁰ 2 Sam. xiii. 13, xiv. 11, 19.

(2.) The military organization, which was in part inherited from Saul, but greatly developed by David, was as follows:—

Military organization.

(a.) “The Host” was the whole available military force of Israel, consisting of all males capable of bearing arms, and was summoned only for war. There were twelve divisions who were held to be on duty month by month; and over each of them presided an officer, selected for this purpose, from the other military bodies formed by David.¹ The army was still distinguished from those of surrounding nations by its primitive aspect of a force of infantry without cavalry. The only innovations as yet allowed were, the introduction of a very limited number of chariots,² and of mules for the princes and officers instead of the asses.³ According to a Mussulman tradition,⁴ David invented chain armor. The usual weapons were still spears and shields,⁵ though with large bodies of archers and slingers. The commander in chief of the army was an office already recognized under Saul, when it was held by Abner.⁶ But it reached its full grandeur in the person of Joab, to whom it was given as the prize for the escalade of Jerusalem. He had a chief armor-bearer of his own (Naharai a Beerothite),⁷ and ten attendants to carry his baggage.⁸ He had the charge, formerly belonging to the king or judge, of giving the signal by trumpet,⁹ for advance or retreat. He commanded the

The Host.

¹ 1 Chr. xxvii. 1–15.

² 2 Sam. viii. 4.

³ Ibid. xiii. 29, xviii. 9.

⁴ *Koran*, xxi. 80. Comp. the legends in Weil's *Legends*, p. 155, and Lane's *Selections from the Koran*, p. 229. Thus a good coat of mail is

often called by the Arabs “Dáoodee,” i. e. Davidean.

⁵ Ps. xxxv. 2, 3; 1 Chr. xii. 24, 34, &c.

⁶ See Lecture XX.

⁷ 2 Sam. xxiii. 37; 1 Chr. xi. 39.

⁸ 2 Sam. xviii. 15.

⁹ Ibid. 16, xx. 22.

army in the king's absence.¹ He was called by the almost royal title of "lord," or "prince of the king's army."² He, with the King, assisted in the fortification of the city. He, with the King, supplied offerings to the sacred treasury. His usual residence was in Jerusalem, but he had a house and property with barley-fields adjoining on the edge³ of the Jordan Wilderness, near an ancient sanctuary, Baal-hazor, where Absalom had extensive sheep-walks. The "sons of Joab" were to be found as a separate class⁴ after the captivity.

(b.) The body-guard also had existed in the court of Saul, and David himself had probably been its commanding officer.⁵ But it now assumed a peculiar form. They were at least in name foreigners, as having been drawn from the Philistines, probably during David's residence at the court of Gath. They are usually called from this circumstance "Cherethites and Pelethites," that is "Cretans⁶ and refugees," but had also⁷ a body especially from Gath⁸ amongst them, of whom the name of one, Ittai, is preserved. The captain of the force was, however, not only not a foreigner, but an Israelite of the highest distinction and purest descent, who outlived David, and became the chief support of the throne of his son, — namely, Benaiah, son of the chief priest Jehoiada, representative of the eldest branch of Aaron's house.⁹

Three mighty exploits appear to have gained this high

¹ 2 Sam. xii. 26, 27.

² Ibid. xi. 11; 1 Chr. xxvii. 34.

³ 2 Sam. xiv. 30, xiii. 23; 1 Kings ii. 34.

⁴ Neh. vii. 11.

⁵ See 1 Sam. xxii. 14 (Hebr.); Ewald iii. 98.

⁶ See Lectures XVI. and XXXVI.

⁷ A tradition in Jerome (*Qu. Heb.* on 1 Chr. xviii. 17) speaks of their being in the place of the seventy judges appointed by Moses.

⁸ 2 Sam. xv. 19. But here the reading is doubtful (Ewald, iii. 177, *note*). See Lecture XXIV.

⁹ 2 Sam. viii. 18, xx. 23; 2 Kings i. 38, 44.

place for him, as Joab's had been secured by the capture of Jerusalem. He attacked two heroes¹ or princes of Moab. He encountered a lion² which a snow-storm had driven to take refuge in a cistern or pitfall, where none but Benaiah ventured to penetrate. He fought with a gigantic Egyptian, whose spear was so huge that it seemed³ like a tree thrown across a ravine. This the Israelite soldier forced from his hand, and, like another David, slew the giant with his own weapon.

(c.) The most peculiar military institution in David's army was that which arose out of the peculiar circumstances of his early life. As the nucleus of the Russian army is the Preobajinsky regiment formed by Peter the Great out of the companions who gathered round him in the suburb of that name in Moscow, so the nucleus of what afterwards became the only standing army in David's forces was the band of 600 men who had gathered round him in his wanderings. The six hundred.

The number of 600 was still preserved, with the name of *Gibborim*, "heroes" or "mighty men." It became yet further subdivided⁴ into three large bands of 200 each, and small bands of twenty each. The small bands were commanded by thirty officers, one for each band, who together formed "the thirty," and the three large bands by three officers, who together formed "the three," and the whole by one chief, "the captain of the mighty men."⁵ This commander of the whole force was Abishai, David's nephew.⁶ "The three" were Jashobeam⁷

¹ 2 Sam. xxiii. 20, "Sons of Ariel" (possibly the King of Moab), or "lion-like men."

² Ibid. See Joseph. (*Ant.* vii. 12, 4).

³ 2 Sam. xxiii. 20 (LXX.).

⁴ See Ewald, iii. 178, for the whole of this arrangement.

⁵ 2 Sam. xxiii. 8-39; 1 Chr. xi. 9-47.

⁶ 1 Chr. xi. 20; and comp. 2 Sam. xvi. 9.

⁷ 1 Chr. xi. 11.

or Adino,¹ Eleazar,² and Shammah.³ Of "the thirty," some few only are known to fame elsewhere. Asahel, David's⁴ nephew; Elhanan, the victor of at least one Goliath;⁵ Joel, the brother or son of Nathan;⁶ Naharai, the armor-bearer of Joab;⁷ Eliam,⁸ the son of Ahithophel; Ira, one of David's⁹ priests; Uriah the Hittite.¹⁰

(3.) Side by side with this military organization were established new social and moral institutions. Officers of state. Some were entirely for pastoral, agricultural, and financial purposes,¹¹ others for judicial.¹² Each tribe had its own head.¹³ Of these the most remarkable were Elihu, David's brother (probably Eliab), prince of Judah, and Jaasiel, son of Abner, of Benjamin.¹⁴ In the court or council of the King were the counsellors, Ahithophel of Giloh, and Jonathan,¹⁵ the King's nephew, both renowned for their marvellous sagacity; the companion or "friend," Hushai,¹⁶ and, at the close of the reign, perhaps Shimei;¹⁷ the scribe or secretary of state, Sheva or Seraiah, and at one time Jonathan,¹⁸ David's uncle; Jehoshaphat, the recorder or historian,¹⁹ and Ado-

1 2 Sam. xxiii. 8.

2 1 Chr. xi. 12; 2 Sam. xxiii. 9.

3 2 Sam. xxiii. 11; the LXX. (verse 8) make them: (1) Isboseth the Canaanite; (2) Adino the Asonite; (3) Eleazar, son of Dodo.

4 1 Chr. xi. 26; 2 Sam. ii. 18.

5 1 Chr. xi. 26; 2 Sam. xxi. 19.

6 1 Chr. xi. 38, the LXX. has "son."

7 Ibid. xi. 39; 2 Sam. xxiii. 37.

8 2 Sam. xxiii. 34.

9 1 Chr. xi. 40; 2 Sam. xxiii. 38, xx. 26.

10 1 Chr. xi. 41; 2 Sam. xxiii. 39, xi. 3, &c.

11 1 Chr. xxvii. 25-31.

12 Ibid. xxvi. 29-32.

13 Ibid. xxvii. 16-22.

14 Ibid. 18, 21.

15 Ibid. 32, 33.

16 Ibid. 33; Sam. xv. 37, xvi. 19.

17 Joseph. *Ant.* vii. 14, § 4. Possibly Shimeah, David's brother (Ewald, iii. 226). In the Persian court, the king's *Hadeem* or "playfellow."

18 2 Sam. xx. 25; 1 Chr. xxvii. 32.

19 2 Sam. xx. 24. As in the court of Xerxes (Herod. vii. 100, viii. 90) and of the modern Shah.

ram or Adoniram, the tax collector, both of whom survived him.¹

But the more peculiar of David's institutions were those directly bearing on religion. Two Proph-^{The}ets appear as the King's constant advisers. Of Prophets. these, Gad, who seems to have been the elder, had been David's companion in exile; and his title, "the Seer," belongs probably to the earliest form of the Prophetic schools. Nathan, who appears for the first time after the establishment of the kingdom at Jerusalem, is distinguished both by his title of "the Prophet," and by the nature of the prophecies which he utters,² as belonging to the purest type of the Prophetic dispensation, and as the hope of the new generation,³ which he supports in the person of Solomon. Two High-Priests also appear — representatives of the two rival^{The Priests.} houses of Aaron.⁴ Here again, as in the case of the two Prophets, one, Abiathar, who had been the companion of David's exile, and was by his race connected with the old time of the Judges;⁵ the other Zadok, joining him after the death of Saul, and becoming afterwards the support of his son, who thus became ultimately the head of the Aaronic⁶ family. Abiathar, probably for old affection's sake, attended the King at Jerusalem; Zadok still ministered by the ancient tabernacle at Gibeon.⁷ Besides these four great religious functionaries there were two classes of subordinates, — Prophets, specially instructed in singing and music, under Asaph, Heman the grandson of Samuel, and Je-

¹ 2 Sam. xx. 24; 1 Kings xii. 18, iv. 3, 6.

⁴ 1 Chr. xxiv. 3.

⁵ Ibid. xxvii. 34; comp. Blunt,

² 2 Sam. vii. 3, 5-17, xii. 1-14. (LXX.)

Undes. Coincid. II. xv.

⁶ Ibid. xxvii. 17.

³ Ibid. xii. 25; 1 Kings i. 11-44.

⁷ Ibid. xvi. 39.

See Lecture XXVI.

duthun;¹ and Levites, or attendants on the sanctuary, who again were subdivided into the guardians of the gates,² and guardians of the treasures which had been accumulated, since the reëstablishment of the nation, by Samuel, Saul, Abner, Joab, and David himself.³ One singular character is added to this group by Mussulman

Lokman. traditions, the half-fabulous sage Lokman — the Ethiopian slave, renowned for his wise proverbs, who, whilst seated amongst the grandees of David's court, when asked how he had attained such eminence, replied, "By always speaking the truth, by always keeping my word, and by never meddling in matters that did not concern me."⁴

The collection of these various ministers and representatives of worship round the capital must have given a concentrated aspect to the history in David's time, such as it had never borne before. But the main peculiarity of the whole must have been, that it so well harmonized with the character of him who was its centre. As his early martial life still placed him at the head of the military system which had sprung up around him, so his early education and his natural disposition placed him at the head of his own religious institutions. Himself a Prophet and Psalmist, he was one in heart with those whose advice he sought, and whose arts he fostered. And, more remarkably still, though Religious supremacy of David. not himself a Priest, he yet assumed almost all the functions usually ascribed to the priestly office. He wore, as we have seen, the priestly dress, offered the sacrifices, gave the priestly benediction;⁵ he walked round about the altar in sacred⁶ processions; and, as

¹ 1 Chr. xxv. 1-31.

² Ibid. xxvi. 1-19.

³ Ibid. xxvi. 20-28.

⁴ D'Herbelot, "Locman al-hakim."

⁵ 2 Sam. vi. 14, 17, 18.

⁶ Ps. xxvi. 6 (if the title may be trusted. See Perowne).

if to include his whole court within the same sacerdotal sanctity, Benaiah the captain of his guard was a priest¹ by descent, and joined in the sacred² music; David himself and "the captains of the host" arranged the Prophetical duties and fixed the festivals;³ and his sons as well as one of his chief functionaries, Ira the Manassite,⁴ are actually called "priests."⁵ Such a union was never seen before or since in the Jewish history. Even Solomon fell below it in some important points. Christian sovereigns have rarely ventured on so direct a control. But the supremacy of David is a fact which cannot be overlooked. What the heathen historian Justin antedates by referring it back to Aaron, is a true description of the effect of the reign of David: "Sacerdos mox rex creatur: semperque exinde hic mos "apud Judæos fuit, ut eosdem reges et sacerdotes haberent; quantum justitiâ religione permixtâ, incredibile quantum coaluere."⁶ How profound was that union of "justice" and "religion" — to the heathen so incredible — we have already seen.

As in peace, so in war, this union of religious and secular greatness was continued. It was as Founder of the Israelitish Empire even more than as Founder of the royal dynasty or of the order of Psalmists, that David seemed in the eyes of his contemporaries to be "the Light and the Splendor of Israel."⁷ It was as Conqueror, even more than as Ruler, that he especially ap-

1 *ὁ ἐπεὶ τῷ γένει* (Joseph. *Ant.* vii. 12, § 4); 2 Sam. viii. 18.

2 1 Chr. xxvii. 5, xvi. 6.

3 Ibid. xxv. 1; Eccles. xlvii. 9, 10.

4 2 Sam. xx. 26 (*Cohen*), translated in the A. V. "chief ruler," but by the LXX. "Priest."

5 2 Sam. viii. 18; 1 Chr. xviii. 17, (*cohanim*) translated by the A. V. "chief rulers."

6 Justin, *Hist.* xxxvi. 2.

7 2 Sam. xxi. 17; 1 Kings xi. 36, xv. 4; Ps. cxxxii. 17.

pears as the *Messiah*,¹ the Anointed one. It is in his order of battle, even more than in his religious processions, that the Ruler of Israel — whether David or David's descendant — appears as the Priestly King. When he is addressed as a Priest, though not of Levitical descent, — a Priest bursting through all the common regulations of the Priesthood, — an immortal Priest like the ancient Melchizedek, — it is as the mighty Leader who is to trample, like Joshua, on the necks of his enemies, who is to be surrounded by his armies, numerous and fresh and brilliant as the drops of the morning dew, striking through kings in the day of his wrath, filling his pathway with the corpses of the dead, wounding the heads of many countries, refreshed as he passes by the watercourse which divides country from country, and going on with his head aloft, conquering and to conquer.² This was the foundation of that resplendent image of the Messiah, which it required the greatest of all religious changes to move from the mind of the Jewish nation, in order to raise up instead of it the still more exalted idea which was to take its place, — an Anointed Sovereign conquering by other arts than those of war, and in other dominions than those of earthly empire.

To understand how deeply this imagery is fixed in David's life, we must briefly pass through the wars in which the dominions of David assumed their new proportions.

His first conquests were over the Philistines. Two battles immediately following on the occupation of Jerusalem have been already noticed. But

Philistine
war.

¹ The *word* is applied to David in xviii. 50, xxviii. 8, lxxxix. 20, 38, 2 Sam. xix. 21, xxii. 51, xxiii. 1, Ps. cxxxii. 17.

² Ps. cx. 1 (see Ewald, iii. 202).

the complete reduction of the country was effected by the capture of Gath, and was the longest remembered. It was the scene of his own exile, and the chief of the five towns of Philistia, and was regarded as the key of the whole country.¹ In the encounters which took place round this famous city may have occurred the adventurous single combats² between the warriors of David's army and the gigantic champions of Gath, which repeat his own first achievement. His nephew Jonathan, who must have been but a youth, almost exactly reënacts the original combat. It would seem that these were also the last occasions on which these personal displays of his prowess were made. He had so narrowly escaped, by the intervention only of his nephew Abishai, that henceforth he was kept out of the direct battle, lest he should extinguish the torch that lighted Israel on its way to victory.³

The next war was with the hitherto friendly state of Moab, apparently in the depth of winter.⁴ It is a Jewish tradition that the King of Moab ^{Moabite war.} broke the trust which David had reposed in him, and put to death the aged parents confided to his charge.⁵ The invention of such a reason, if it be an invention, implies a sense that some explanation was needed of the vengeance, so terrible in its results, though so briefly reported, which exterminated one third of the nation,⁶

¹ This (whatever be the precise meaning of *Metheg-ammah*) must be the general sense of 2 Sam. viii. 1, and 1 Chr. xviii. 1. See Eccles. xlvii. 7.

² 2 Sam. xxi. 15-22; 1 Chr. xx. 4-8.

³ 2 Sam. xxi. 17. It has been argued, from 2 Sam. x. 18, xii. 29,

that this must have been later in David's life. But there is no proof that in the Ammonite wars he was engaged in personal conflict.

⁴ 2 Sam. xxiii. 20.

⁵ See Lecture XXII. See the quotations in Meyer, *Seder Olam*, 525.

⁶ 2 Sam. viii. 3.

and reduced the remainder to slavery. The treasures of Heshbon and Ar were carried off for the future temple which David was preparing.¹ As Joab had won his high place by the capture of Jerusalem, it is probable that so his successor Benaiah won his place at the head of the royal guards by his three exploits in this campaign.

But David's great war was that which, beginning and ending with Ammon, involved in its sweep the whole country east of the Jordan as far as the Euphrates. The old king of Ammon, who had roused the hostilities of Saul, seems to have been proportionately friendly to the rival David, — possibly from some family relationship obscurely indicated through the parentage of David's sister Abigail. A Jewish tradition relates that on the slaughter of David's family by the neighboring king of Moab, the one of his brothers who escaped found shelter with Nahash. However this may be, on the death of Nahash, David sent messengers of condolence to his successor, who requited the embassy with an insult, which provoked the most determined vengeance recorded in the whole of David's reign. The war, thus begun, was divided into five distinct campaigns. The forces of Syria were subsidized by Ammon and combined in an attack on Medeba, a town of Reuben. To relieve this was the object of the first campaign,² conducted by Joab, who undertook the attack on the Syrians, and Abishai, who undertook the attack on Ammon. The second campaign carried the war into a wider field. Syria became now the chief object. David himself appeared at the head of his army. The whole body of Aramaic tribes, even those from beyond³ the

¹ See Lecture XXII.

³ 2 Sam. x. 16; 1 Chron. xix. 16.

² 1 Chron. xix. 7-15; 2 Sam. x.

Jordan, rallied in a death-struggle for their independence. At the decisive battle of Helam they were routed, with the loss of their commander, Shobach, and a second victory reduced the capital, Damascus.¹ The importance of the campaign was marked in many ways. It is the only war of this time that has left traces on heathen records.² The Empire was at once extended to the Euphrates, and Israelite officers were placed over the intermediate towns. The King of Hamath, on the distant Orontes, became an ally of the victorious David. The trophies of the war long remained amongst the most conspicuous historic monuments of Jerusalem. The horses for which Syria was famous were destroyed, for their introduction into Israel was not yet come. But one hundred chariots came in stately procession to Jerusalem, and in the sacred ornaments of the Temple that was to be, the golden shields³ and the brazen basin and columns long reminded the Israelites of the great fight beside the Euphrates. "Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of Jehovah our God. They are brought down and fallen, but we are risen and stand upright." So probably sang the Psalmists,⁴ who welcomed David home from this first stage of the war, with all that fervor of religious gratitude⁵ which saw in the Conqueror's brilliant deeds the reflection of the Divine favor.

¹ 2 Sam. viii. 3; 1 Chr. viii. 11.
(See Ewald, iii. 198.)

² Nicolaus of Damascus (Joseph. *Ant.* vii. 5, § 2) and Eupolemus (Eusebius, *Præp. Ev.* ix. 30).

³ 2 Sam. viii. 7; Cant. iv. 4. See Lecture XXVII.

⁴ Ps. xx. 7 (Syr. version of title).

⁵ This seems the best explanation of Ps. lx. 6-12, cviii. 7-13, which evidently contains the ancient Davidic Psalm of this period, afterwards accommodated in Ps. lx. 1-5, to a mournful, in Ps. cviii. 1-4 to a joyful, event.

The third campaign was against Edom. It would seem as if in preparation for this, David had arrayed the whole forces of Palestine. For this great attempt his Divine Protector had portioned out the ancient settlements of Jacob both on the west and east of Jordan. Shechem and Succoth, Gilead and Manasseh were both to be there. Ephraim was to be the covering helmet of the Mighty Leader, who had the rocky mass of Judah for his invincible head. Philistia had quailed before his mighty advance. He had washed his feet in Moab as in a basin of dregs, and now the sandal which had been drawn off for this act of scorn was to be held by Edom as by a submissive slave.¹ That ancient enemy, the race of the red-haired Esau, we have not seen since the Passage through the Wilderness — hardly since the day when the two brothers parted by the sepulchre of Isaac.² Along all the red mountains of Edom, down to the impregnable city of “the Rock,” the wild tribes came forth to assist their Ammonite neighbors against the new aggressor. The earlier stage of the war was conducted by Abishai, the later by Joab. Abishai won the victory by a decisive battle in a ravine, apparently commanding the approach to Petra, and then by the storming of the rocky hold itself. “Who will lead us into the strong city, who will bring us into Edom?”³ The conquest was completed by Joab. He took up his quarters in the captured city. For six months he employed himself in the savage work of exterminating the rock population. With a grim performance of duty, he buried the corpses of the dead as fast as they fell in the tombs of Petra. The terror of his name⁴ was so great, that long after-

¹ Ps. cviii. 7-9.

² See Lectures III. and VII.

³ Ps. lx. 9, cviii. 10.

⁴ 1 Kings xi. 21 (Heb.).

wards nothing but the news of his death could encourage the exiled chief who had escaped from this eastern Glencoe to return to the haunts of his fathers. David himself came at the close of the campaign to arrange the conquered territory. All that remained of the nation became his slaves; garrisons were established along the mountain passes, and David erected a pillar¹ or other triumphal monument, to commemorate the greatness of the success.

The fourth and fifth campaigns were reserved for the nation which had led to this wide-spreading war. The spring came, "the time when kings go forth to battle,"² and the devoted Ammonites, now stripped of their allies on north and south, were made over to the relentless Joab. Amongst the hills on the edge of the pastoral country was "the great city," "Rabbah of the children of Ammon." It consisted of a lower town and a citadel. The lower town was, probably from the residence of the kings, called the "royal city," and, from the unusual sight of a perennial³ stream of water rising within the town and running through it, the "city of waters." The citadel, properly called "Rabbah," was on a steep cliff on the north side of the town. It contained the temple of Moloch, the god or "king" of Ammon, to whom were made the sacrifices of children. The statue of the god was surmounted by a huge gold crown,⁴ containing, according to later tradition,⁵ a precious stone of magnetic power. The country which he overlooked was regarded as his pos-

¹ 2 Sam. viii. 13, 14 (LXX., Jerome, Gesenius, Ewald). For "Syrians" (Aram) should be read "Edom." See VALLEY OF SALT in *Dict. of Bible*.

² 2 Sam. xi. 1.

³ See *Sinai and Palestine*, Chap. VIII.

⁴ 2 Sam. xii. 30.

⁵ See MOLECH in *Dict. of Bible*.

session. His priests ranked above the nobles. The nobles took their rank as his servants.¹

Against this city the whole force of Israel was gathered under Joab. The king's own guards² were there, and (to mark the magnitude of the crisis) the Ark,³ for the first time since its return from the Philistine captivity, is recorded to have accompanied the expedition. The army was encamped in booths⁴ round the city. For a whole year — probably from its perennial stream — it held out against the besiegers. From a particular part of the wall, constant sallies were made. On one occasion, for reasons at the time unknown to the army, Joab ordered a detachment headed by one of the bravest and best of the king's officers to come within the fatal range. The siege continued notwithstanding, and the lower town was at last taken. Then, with the true loyalty of his character, Joab sent a triumphant message to his uncle at Jerusalem, inviting him to come and finish the war for himself. "I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters." David was to do the rest, "lest Joab take the city, and it be called after his name." The king was roused from his ease at Jerusalem. The Ammonites with all their property had crowded into the upper fortress; the one well within at last failed, and David entered the place in triumph. When they approached the statue of Moloch, there was, according to Jewish tradition, a panic in the ranks of the conquerors, till Ittai of Gath⁵ — doing what no Israelite could have done for fear of the pollution — tore the vast golden covering from the idol's

¹ Jer. xlix. 1, 2, 3; Amos i. 15, where "their king" refers to Moloch.

² 2 Sam. xi. 11, 17, "the servants of David."

³ Ibid. xi. 11.

⁴ Ibid. (Heb.).

⁵ Jerome, *Qu. Heb.* on 2 Sam. xii. 30, and 1 Chron. xx. 2.

head, and brought it to David. It was purified, and from that time is described as the royal crown.—“Thou hast set a crown of pure gold upon his head.”¹

So in all probability sang the Psalmist who celebrated this proud victory. He celebrated also its darker side. “Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thy wrath.” The expressions agree well with the cruel extermination of the conquered inhabitants by fire² and by strange and savage tortures, — a vengeance to be accounted for, not excused, by the formidable resistance of the besieged.

Thus ended the wars of David. It may be that the 18th Psalm was once again sung on this last deliverance “from all his enemies.” It may be that the 68th Psalm received some new accommodation to the triumphal return of the Ark³ to Jerusalem. The 21st Psalm, at any rate, wound up the joyous festival, with the glad thought that “the king shall joy in Thy strength, O Lord; and in Thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice. Thou hast given him his heart’s desire, and hast not denied him the request of his lips.” So it was to all outward appearance, and the new son who was born to him at this time received the auspicious name of Solomon, as if to inaugurate the universal peace and prosperity which seemed to have set in. It remains for us to trace the deep canker that lay concealed under this outward show.

¹ Ps. xxi. 3; Joseph. *Ant.* vii. 7, § 5. danic wars (Jer. xlviii. 45, xlix. 2; Amos ii. 1). A similar custom existed among the Philistines (Judg.

² The burning alive of the captives, which seems indicated in Psalm xxi. xv. 6).

³ Hengstenberg on Ps. lxxviii. 9, and 2 Sam. xii. 31, appears to have been a custom usual in trans-Jor-

LECTURE XXIV.
THE FALL OF DAVID.

The Psalms which, by their titles or contents, belong to this period, are:—

For the affair of Uriah, Psalms xxxii., li.

For the revolt of Absalom, Psalms iii., iv., lxix. (?), cix. (?), cxliii.

LECTURE XXIV.

THE FALL OF DAVID.

THREE great external calamities are recorded in David's reign, which may be regarded as marking its beginning, middle, and close. A three years' famine;¹ a three months' exile; a three days' pestilence. Of these the first² has been already noticed in connection with the last traces of the house of Saul. The third belongs to the last decline of his prosperity. But the second forms the culminating part of the group of incidents which contains the main tragedy of David's life.

Amongst the thirty commanders of the thirty bands into which the Israelite army of David was divided, was the gallant Uriah,³ like others of ^{Uriah and} ^{Bathsheba.} his officers,⁴ a foreigner—a Hittite. His name,⁵ however, and perhaps his manner of speech,⁶ indicate that he had adopted the Jewish religion. He had married Bathsheba, a woman of extraordinary beauty, the daughter of Eliam,—one of his brother officers,⁷ and possibly the son of Ahithophel. He was passionately

¹ 2 Sam. xxiv. 13 (LXX.); 1 Chron. xxi. 12. See Ewald, iii. 207.

² That it took place early in David's reign appears (1) from the freshness of the allusion to Saul's act, 2 Sam. xxi. 1, 2; (2) from the apparent allusion to the massacre of Saul's sons in 2 Sam. xvi. 8; (3) from the apparent connection with 2 Sam. ix. (See Lecture XXI. Ewald, iii. 173, 174.)

³ 2 Sam. xxiii. 39; 1 Chron. xi. 41.

⁴ Ittai of Gath, Ish-bosheth the Canaanite, 2 Sam. xxiii. 8 (LXX.); Zelek the Ammonite, xxiii. 37, Ismaiah the Gibeonite, 1 Chron. xii. 4.

⁵ Uriah, Ur-Jah = "Fire of Jehovah."

⁶ 2 Sam. xi. 11.

⁷ Ibid. xi. 3, xxiii. 34. Hence, perhaps, as Professor Blunt conjectures (*Coincidences*, II. x.), Uriah's first acquaintance with Bathsheba.

devoted to his wife, and their union was celebrated in Jerusalem as one of peculiar tenderness.¹ He had a house in the city underneath the palace, where, during his absence at the siege of Rabbah with Joab's army, his wife remained behind. From the roof of his palace, the King looked down on the cisterns which were constructed on the top of the lower houses of Jerusalem, and then conceived for Bathsheba the uncontrollable passion to which she offered no resistance. In the hope that the husband's return might cover his own shame, and save the reputation of the injured woman, he sent back for Uriah from the camp, on the pretext of asking news of the war. The King met with an unexpected obstacle in the austere soldierlike spirit which guided the conduct of the sturdy Canaanite. He steadily refused to go home, or partake of any of the indulgences of domestic life, whilst the ark and the host were in booths and his comrades lying in the open air.² He partook of the royal hospitality, but slept always in the guards' quarter³ at the gate of the palace. On the last night of his stay, the King at a feast vainly endeavored to entrap him by intoxication. The soldier was overcome by the debauch, but retained his sense of duty sufficiently to insist on sleeping at the palace. On the morning of the third day, David sent him back to the camp with a letter containing the command to Joab to contrive his destruction in the battle.⁴ Probably to an unscrupulous soldier like Joab the absolute will of the King was sufficient.

¹ 2 Sam. xii. 3.

² Ibid. xi. 11. The words are admirably applied by Oliver Cromwell in a rebuke to his son Richard (Carlyle's *Cromwell*, Letter clxxviii.).

³ Ibid. 9. Comp. Neh. iii. 16.

⁴ Josephus (*Ant.* vii. 7, § 1) adds, that he gave as a reason an imaginary offence of Uriah. None such appears in the letter as preserved in

2 Sam. xi.

The device of Joab was, to observe the part of the wall of Rabbath-Ammon where the strongest force of the besieged was congregated, and thither, as a kind of forlorn hope, to send Uriah. A sally took place. Uriah with his soldiers advanced as far as the gate of the city, and was there shot down by the Ammonite archers. It seems as if it had been an established maxim of Israelitish warfare not to approach the wall of a besieged city; and one instance of the fatal result was quoted, as if proverbially,¹ against it, — the sudden and ignominious death of Abimelech at Thebez, which cut short the hopes of the then rising monarchy. Just as Joab had forewarned the messenger, the King broke into a furious passion on hearing of the loss, and cited, almost in the very words which Joab had predicted, the case of Abimelech. The messenger, as instructed by Joab, calmly continued, and ended the story with the words: "Thy servant also, Uriah the Hittite, is dead." In a moment David's anger is appeased. He sends an encouraging message to Joab on the unavoidable chances of war, and urges him to continue the siege. Uriah had fallen unconscious of his wife's dishonor. She hears of her husband's death. The narrative gives no hint as to her shame or remorse. She "mourned" with the usual signs of grief as a widow; and then became the wife of David.²

Thus far the story belongs to the usual crimes of an Oriental despot. Detestable as was the double guilt of this dark story, we must still remember that David was not an Alfred or a Saint Louis. He was an Eastern

¹ This appears from the fact that Joab exactly anticipates what the king will say when he hears of the disaster. See the additions of the LXX. to verse 22, with the remarks of Thenius thereon. See Lecture XV. p. 391.

² 2 Sam. xi. 27.

king, exposed to all the temptations of a king of Ammon or Damascus then, of a Sultan of Bagdad or Constantinople in modern times. What follows, however, could have been found nowhere in the ancient world but in the Jewish monarchy.

A year had passed; the dead Uriah was forgotten; the child of guilt was born in the royal house, and loved with all the passionate tenderness of David's paternal heart. Suddenly the Prophet Nathan appears before him. He comes as if to claim redress for a wrong in humble life. It was the true mission of the Prophets, as champions of the oppressed, in the courts of kings.

Apologue of Nathan. It was the true Prophetic spirit that spoke through Nathan's mouth. The apologue of the rich man and the ewe lamb has, besides its own intrinsic tenderness, a supernatural elevation which is the best sign of true Revelation. It ventures to disregard all particulars, and is content to aim at awakening the general sense of outraged justice. It fastens on the essential guilt of David's sin, — not its sensuality, or its impurity, so much as its meanness and selfishness. It rouses the King's conscience by that teaching described¹ as specially characteristic of prophecy, making manifest his own sin in the indignation which he has expressed at the sin of another. *Thou art the man* is, or ought to be, the conclusion, expressed or unexpressed, of every practical sermon. A true description of a real incident, if like in its general character, — however unlike to our own case in all the surrounding particulars, — strikes home with greater force than the sternest personal invective. This is the mighty function of all great works of fiction. They have in their power that indirect appeal to the conscience of which the address of

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.

Nathan is the first and most exquisite example. His parable is repeated, in actual words, in a famous romance which stirred the imagination of our fathers, and is the key-note of other tales of like genius which have no less stirred our own.

As the apologue of Nathan reveals the true Prophet, so the Psalms of David reveal the true Penitent. Two¹ at least—the 51st and 32d—^{Repentance of David.} can hardly belong to any other period. He has fallen. That abyss which yawns by the side of lofty genius and strong passion had opened and closed over him. The charm of his great name is broken. But the sudden revulsion of feeling shows that his conscience was not dead. Our reverence for David is shaken, not destroyed. The power of his former character was still there. It was overpowered for the time, but it was capable of being roused again. “The great waterfloods” had burst over him, but “they had not come nigh” to his inmost soul.² The Prophet had by his opening words, “Give me a judgment,”³ thrown him back upon his better nature. There was still an eye to see, there was still an ear to hear. His indignation against the rich man of the parable showed that the moral sense was not wholly extinguished. The instant recognition of his guilt breaks up the illusion of months. “I have sinned against the Lord.” The sense of his injustice to man waxes faint before his sense of sin against God. “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight.”⁴ This is the peculiar turn given to his

¹ Ewald, while acknowledging the Davidic origin of the 32d, doubts the 51st. But if verses 18 and 19 can be regarded as a later accommodation, the rest of the Psalm suits no other time or person equally.

² Ps. xxxii. 6.

³ 2 Sam. xii. 1 (Vulgate, and The-nius).

⁴ Ps. li. 4. For the legends of this incident see Fabricius, *Cod. Pseude-pig.* V. T. p. 1000; *Koran*, xxxviii. 20–24; Weil's *Legends*, p. 158–161, 167–170.

confession by the elevation and force of his religious convictions. He is worn away by grief; day and night he feels a mighty Hand heavy upon him; his soul is parched up as with the drought of an Eastern summer.¹ But he rises above the present by his passionate hopes for the future. His prayers are the simple expressions of one who loathes sin because he has been acquainted with it, who longs to have truth in his innermost self, to have hands thoroughly clean, to make a fresh start in life with a spirit² free, and just, and new. This is the true Hebrew, Christian, idea of "Repentance": — not penance, not remorse, not mere general confessions of human depravity, not minute confessions of minute sins dragged out by a too scrupulous casuistry, but change of life and mind. And in this, the crisis of his fate, and from the agonies of his grief, a doctrine emerges, as universal and as definite as was wrung out of the like struggles of the Apostle Paul. Now, if ever, would have been the time, had his religion led him in that direction, to have expiated his crime by the sacrifices of the Levitical ritual. It would seem as if for a moment such a solution had occurred to him. But he at once rejects it. He remains true to the Prophetic teaching. He knows that no substitution of dead victims, however costly, can fill up the gulf between himself and God. He knows that it is another and higher sacrifice which God approves. "Thou desirest no sacrifice — else would "I give it thee; but thou delightest not in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit — a "broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."³ And even out of that broken and troubled heart, the dawn of a better life springs up. "Be glad "in the Lord, and rejoice O ye righteous; and shout for

¹ Ps. xxxii. 4.² Ps. li. 12.³ Ps. li. 16, 17.

“joy, all ye that are true of heart.”¹ He is not what he was before; but he is far nobler and greater than many a just man who never fell and never repented. He is far more closely bound up with the sympathies of mankind than if he had never fallen. We cannot wonder that a scruple should have arisen in recording so terrible a crime; and accordingly the Chronicler throws a veil over the whole transaction. But the bolder spirit of the more Prophetic Books of Samuel has been justified by the enduring results. “Who is called the man “after God’s own heart?” so the whole matter is summed up by a critic not too indulgent to sacred characters:— “David, the Hebrew king, had fallen into sins enough— “blackest crimes — there was no want of sin. And “therefore the unbelievers sneer, and ask ‘Is this your “man according to God’s heart?’ The sneer, I must “say, seems to me but a shallow one. What are faults, “what are the outward details of a life, if the inner “secret of it, the remorse, temptations, the often baffled, “never ended struggle of it be forgotten? . . . David’s “life and history as written for us in those Psalms of “his, I consider to be the truest emblem ever given us “of a man’s moral progress and warfare here below. All “earnest souls will ever discern in it the faithful strug- “gle of an earnest human soul towards what is good and “best. Struggle often baffled — sore baffled — driven “as into entire wreck: yet a struggle never ended, ever “with tears, repentance, true unconquerable purpose, “begun anew.”²

As in the Psalms, so in the history, the force of the original character is seen to regain its lost ascendancy. The passionate grief of the King over the little ^{Death of his child.} infant born to Bathsheba is the first direct indi-

¹ Ps. xxxii. 11.

² Carlyle’s *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, p. 72.

cation of that depth of parental affection which fills so large a part of David's subsequent story. His impenetrable seclusion during the illness of the child, the elder brothers gathering round to comfort him, the sudden revulsion of thought after the child's death, with one of those very few indications of belief in another life that break through the silence of the Hebrew Scriptures, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me," — are proofs that, through all his lapses into savage cruelty and reckless self-indulgence, there still remained a fountain of feeling within, as fresh and pure as when he fed his father's flocks and won the love of Jonathan.

But, though the "free spirit" and "clean heart" of David came back, and though he rallied from the loss of his infant child; though the birth of Solomon was as auspicious as if nothing had occurred to trouble the victorious return from the conquest of Ammon; the clouds from this time gathered over David's fortunes, and henceforward "the sword never departed from his house."¹ The crime itself had sprung from the lawless and licentious life, fostered by the polygamy which David had been the first to introduce; and out of this same polygamy sprang the terrible retribution.²

In order fully to understand what follows, we must return to the internal relations of the royal family. In his early youth he had, like his countrymen generally, but one wife, the Princess Michal. Her ardent love for him, his adventurous mode of winning

The effects
of his polygamy.

Michal.

¹ 2 Sam. xii. 10.

² The Jewish tradition made the offence of David, which called down these calamities, to be the fraud which caused the massacre of the priests at Nob, and interpreted the

forty years of 2 Sam. xv. 7 (Jerome, *Qu. Heb.* ad loc.), to be the interval

between the crime and the punishment. Contrast the far superior morality of the Biblical narrative.

her hand, the skill and courage with which she assisted his escape, — we have already seen. Then came her second marriage with her neighbor Phaltiel, her exile with him across the Jordan, his bitter lamentation when on the border of their common tribe he was parted from her at Bahurim, the probable estrangement between her and David, and the final breach when her regal pride and his eager devotion were brought into collision on the day of his entrance into Jerusalem. Whether, according to Jewish tradition, she returned to Phaltiel, or whether, as the sacred narrative seems to imply, she remained secluded within the palace, her influence henceforth ceased.

The King's numerous concubines¹ were placed together in his own house. But the six wives whom he had brought from his wanderings and from Hebron — to whom he had now added a seventh, Bathsheba (if not more²), lived, as it would seem, with their children, each in separate establishments of their own.³ With them, as we have seen, there lived on terms of intimacy their cousins, who stood to them, however, from their superior age, rather in the relation of uncles. Each of the princes had his royal mule.⁴ The princesses were distinguished by the long sleeves⁵ of their robes.

Wives and concubines.

Amnon.

The eldest of the Princes was Amnon, the son of Ahinoam, whom the King cherished as the heir to the throne, with an affection amounting almost to awe.⁶ His intimate friend in the family was his

¹ 2 Sam. xv. 16. That the ten left behind in Jerusalem were but a part of the whole establishment, appears from xix. 5.

² 2 Sam. v. 13; 1 Chr. xiv. 3.

³ 2 Sam. xiii. 7, 20.

⁴ Ibid. 29.

⁵ Ibid. 18 (Hebr.); comp. Cant. v. 3, and see Josephus, *Ant.* vii. 8, § 1.

⁶ Ibid. 5, 21 (LXX.).

cousin Jonadab, one of those characters¹ who in great houses pride themselves on being acquainted and on dealing with all the secrets of the family. This was one group in the royal circle. Another consisted of the two children of Maacah, the princess of Geshur, — Ab-

salom and his sister Tamar, the only two of
Absalom. purely royal descent. In all of them the

beauty for which the house of Jesse was renowned — David's brothers, David himself, Adonijah, Solomon — seemed to be concentrated. Absalom especially was in this respect the very flower and pride of the whole nation. "In all Israel there was none to be praised for "his beauty," like him. "From the crown of his head "to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him."

The magnificence of his hair was something wonderful. Year by year or month by month its weight was known and counted. He had a sheep-farm near Ephraim or Ephron, a few miles to the northeast of Jerusalem, and another property near the Jordan Valley, where he had erected a monument to keep alive the remembrance of his name, from the melancholy feeling that the three sons who should have preserved his race had died before him.² He had, however, one daughter, who afterwards carried on the royal line in her child, called, after her grandmother, Maacah, and destined to play a conspicuous part in the history of the divided kingdom.³ This daughter was named Tamar, after her

aunt. The elder Tamar, like her brother and
Tamar. her niece, was remarkable for her extraordinary beauty,⁴ whence perhaps she derived her name, "the "palm-tree," the most graceful of oriental trees. For this, and for the homely art of making a peculiar kind⁵

¹ 2 Sam. xiii. 4, 5, 32, 35.

⁴ 2 Sam. xiii. ; 1 xiv. 27.

² Ibid. 23, xviii. 18.

⁵ 2 Sam. xiii. 6, 8, 9.

³ See Lecture XXXVI.

of cakes, the Princess had acquired a renown which reached beyond the seclusion of her brother's house to all the circle of the royal family.

There had been no cloud to disturb the serene relations of these different groups till the fatal day when Amnon, who had long wasted away, grown "morning by morning paler and paler, leaner and leaner," from a desperate passion for his half-sister Tamar, — at last contrived, through the management of Jonadab, to accomplish his evil design. It was a moment long remembered as "the beginning of woes," when on his brutal hatred succeeding to his brutal passion, she found herself driven out of the house, and in a frenzy of grief and indignation tore off the sleeves from her royal robes, and, with her bare arms, clasped on her head the handfuls of ashes which she had snatched from the ground, and rushed to and fro through the streets screaming aloud, till she encountered her brother Absalom, and by him was taken into his own house. The King was afraid or unwilling to punish the crime of the heir to the throne. But on Absalom, as her brother, devolved, according to Eastern¹ notions, the dreadful duty, the frightful pleasure, of avenging his sister's wrong. All the Princes were invited by him to a pastoral festival at his country-house, and there Amnon was slain by his brother's retainers.

Murder of
Amnon.

There was a general alarm. It would seem as if there was something desperate in Absalom's character which made those around him feel that there was an immeasurable vista of vengeance opened. The other Princes rushed to their mules and galloped back to Jerusalem. The exaggerated news had already reached their father that all had perished. Jonadab reassured

¹ As in Gen. xxxiv. 25, 31.

him. Still, the truth was dark enough; and in the presence of a loss which appears to have been deeply felt, not only by the King, but by the whole family, Absalom was forced to retire to exile beyond the limits of Palestine, to his father-in-law's court at Geshur.

But much as the King had loved Amnon, he loved Absalom more: Joab, always loyal, always ready, saw that he only needed an excuse to recall the absent son, and by a succession of devices, Absalom was brought back first to his country property, and then to Jerusalem itself.¹ But meanwhile, he himself had been alienated from David by his long exile. He found himself virtually chief of the King's sons. That strength and violence of will which made him terrible among his brethren was now to vent itself against his father. He courted popularity by constantly appearing in the royal seat of judgment, in the gateway of Jerusalem. He affected royal state by the unusual display of chariots and war-horses, and runners to precede him.² Under pretext of a pilgrimage to Hebron, possibly as the Patriarchal sanctuary, perhaps only as his own birth-place, he there set up his claims to the throne, and became suddenly the head of a formidable revolt. In that ancient capital of the tribe of Judah, he would find adherents jealous of their own elected king's absorption into the nation at large. And not far off, amongst the southern hills, in Giloh, dwelt the renowned Ahithophel, wisest of all the Israelite statesmen. According to the traditional interpretation of several of the Psalms,³ he was in the closest confidence with David, though, if we may trust the indications of the history, he had, through

¹ See the comments of Thenius. years in verse 7, should probably be

² 2 Sam. xv. 1. The date of "forty" "four." See Ewald, iii. 217, 227.

³ Ps. xli., 9; lv. 12-14, 21.

the wrongs of his granddaughter Bathsheba, the deepest personal reasons for enmity.

It was apparently early on the morning of the day after he had received the news of the rebellion that the King left the city of Jerusalem. There is no single day¹ in the Jewish history of which so elaborate an account remains as of this memorable flight. There is none, we may add, that combines so many of David's characteristics, — his patience, his high-spirited religion, his generosity, his calculation: we miss only his daring courage. Was it crushed, for the moment, by the weight of parental grief, or of bitter remorse?

Every stage of the mournful procession was marked by some peculiar incident. He left the city, ^{Flight of David.} accompanied by his whole court. None of his household remained, except ten of the women of the harem, whom he sent back, apparently to occupy the Palace. The usual array of mules and asses was left behind. They were all on foot. The first halt was at a spot on the outskirts of the city, known as "the Far House."² The second was by a solitary olive-tree³ that stood by the road to the wilderness of the Jordan. Here the long procession formed itself. The body-guard of Philistines moved at the head: then followed the great mass of the regular soldiery: next came the high officers of the court; and last, immediately before the King himself, the six hundred warriors, his ancient⁴ companions, with their wives and children. ^{Ittai.} Amongst these David observed Ittai of Gath,

¹ Strange that it should have been reserved for Ewald (iii. 228–235) to have first dwelt on this remarkable fact. In what follows I am indebted to him at every turn.

² 2 Sam. xv. 17; A. V. "a place that was far off."

³ 2 Sam. xv. 18 (LXX.).

⁴ Ewald, iii. 177 note. According to the probable reading of *Gibborim* for *Gittim*.

and with the true nobleness of his character entreated the Philistine chief not to peril his own or his countrymen's lives in the service of a fallen and a stranger sovereign. But Ittai declared his resolution (with a fervor which almost inevitably recalls a like profession made almost on the same spot to the Great Descendant of David¹ centuries afterwards) to follow him in life and in death. The King accepted his faithful service; and calling him to his side, they advanced to the head of the march, and passed over the deep ravine of the Kidron, followed close by the guards and their children. It was the signal that he was determined on flight; and a wail of grief rose from the whole procession, which seemed to be echoed back by mountain and valley, as if "the whole land wept with a loud voice." At this point they were overtaken by another procession, consisting of the Levites and the two Priests, Zadok and Abiathar, bringing the ark from its place on the hill² of Zion to accompany the King in his flight. There is a difference in the conduct of the rival Priests which seems to indicate their different shades of loyalty. Zadok remained by the ark; Abiathar went apart on the mountain side,³ apparently waiting to watch the stream of followers as it flowed past. With a spirit worthy of the King who was Prophet as well as Priest, David refused this new aid. He would not use the ark as a charm; he had too much reverence for it to risk it in his personal peril. He reminded Zadok that he too by his prophetic insight ought to have known better. "*Thou* a seer!" It was a

¹ Matt. xxvi. 35.

² 2 Sam. xv. 24, ἀπὸ Βαυθὰρ (LXX.).

³ According to the Jewish tradition, to consult the Divine oracle on the

hill-top, which was supposed to have returned the answer which guided David's refusal to allow the progress of the ark (Jerome, *Qu. Heb.* ad loc.).

case where the agility of their two sons was likely to be of more avail than the officious zeal of the chief Priests. To them he left the charge of bringing him tidings from the capital, and passed onwards to the Jordan. Another burst of wild lament broke out as the procession turned up the mountain pathway; the King leading the long dirge, which was taken up all down the slope of Olivet. The King drew his cloak over his head,¹ and the rest did the same; he only distinguished by his unsandalled feet. At the top of the mountain, consecrated by one of the altars in that age common on the hill-tops of Palestine, and apparently used habitually by David, they were met by Hushai ^{Hushai.} the Archite, "the friend," as he was officially called, of the King. The priestly garment,² which he wore after the fashion, as it would seem, of David's chief officers, was torn, and his head was smeared with dust, in the agony of his grief. In him David saw his first gleam of hope. For warlike purposes he was useless; but of political stratagem he was a master. A moment before, the tidings had come of the treason of Ahithophel. To frustrate his designs, Hushai was sent back, just in time to meet Absalom arriving from Hebron.

It was noon when David passed over the mountain top, and now, as Jerusalem was left behind, and the new prospect opened before him, two new characters appeared, both in connection with the hostile tribe of Benjamin, whose territory they were entering. One of them was Ziba, slave of Mephibosheth, taking ^{Ziba.} advantage of the civil war to make his own fortunes, and bringing the story that Mephibosheth had gone over to the rebels, in the hope of a restoration

¹ Comp. 2 Sam. xix. 4, and Mark xiv. 72, ἐπιβαλὼν ἐκλαιε.

² 2 Sam. xv. 32; *Cutaneth*; τὸν χιτῶνα; A. V. "coat."

of the dynasty of his grandfather Saul. The King gratefully accepted his offering, took the stores of bread, dates,¹ grapes, and wine for his followers, and, in a moment of indignation, granted to Ziba the whole property of Mephibosheth. At Bahurim, also on the downward pass, he encountered another member of the fallen

Shimei. dynasty, Shimei, the son of Gera.² His house

was just within the borders of Benjamin, on the spot where — apparently for this reason — Michal, the princess of that same house, had left her husband, Phaltiel. All the fury of the rival dynasties, with all the foul names which long feuds had engendered, burst forth as the two parties here came into collision. On the one side the fierce Benjamite saw “the Man of Blood,” stained, as it must have seemed to him, with the slaughter of Abner and Ishbosheth, and the seven princes whose cruel death at Gibeon was fresh in the national recollection. On the other side the wild sons of Zeruiah saw in Shimei one of the “dead dogs,”³ or “dogs’ heads,” according to the offensive language bandied to and fro amongst the political rivals of that age. A deep ravine parted the King’s march from the house of the furious Benjamite. But along the ridge he ran, throwing stones as if for the adulterer’s punishment, or when he came to a patch of dust on the dry hill-side, taking it up, and scattering it over the royal party below, with the elaborate curses of which only eastern partisans are fully masters, — curses which David never forgot,⁴ and of which, according to the

¹ 2 Sam. xvi. 1 (LXX.).

³ 2 Sam. xvi.; comp. 1 Sam. xxiv.

² In the Jewish traditions, he was identified with Nebat, father of Jero-boam, “first of the house of Joseph” (2 Sam. xix. 20). See Jerome, *Qu. Heb.* on 2 Sam. xvi.

14; 2 Sam. iii. 8.

⁴ See 1 Kings ii. 8. It was believed to spell out the words *Adulterer, Moabite, Infidel, Leper, Abominable* (Jerome, *Qu. Heb.* ad. loc.).

Jewish tradition, every letter was significant. The companions of David, who felt an insult to their master as an injury to themselves, could hardly restrain themselves. Abishai — with a fiery zeal, which reminds us of the sons of Thunder centuries later — would fain have rushed across the defile, and cut off the head of the blaspheming rebel. One alone retained his calmness. The King, with a depth of feeling undisturbed by any political animosities, bade them remember that after the desertion of his favorite son anything was tolerable, and (with the turn of thought so natural to an Oriental) that the curses of the Benjamite might divert some portion of the Divine anger from himself, and that they were in a certain sense the direct words of God Himself.”¹ The exiles passed on, and in a state of deep exhaustion reached the Jordan valley, and there rested after the long eventful day,² at the ford or bridge³ of the river. Amongst the thickets of the Jordan, the asses of Ziba were unladen, and the weary travellers refreshed themselves, and waited for tidings from Jerusalem. It must have been long after nightfall, that the joyful sound was heard of the two youths, sons of the High Priests, bursting in upon the encampment with the news from the capital.

Absalom had arrived from Hebron almost immediately after David's departure; and, by the advice of Ahithophel, took the desperate step Counsel of Ahithophel, — the decisive assumption, according to Oriental usage, of royal rights — of seizing what remained of the royal harem in the most public and offensive manner. The

¹ “The Lord hath said unto him, Curse David . . . Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.” (2 Sam. xvi. 10, 11.)

² 2 Sam. xvi. 14, xvii. 22.

³ Joseph. *Ant.* vii. 11, § 2.

next advice was equally bold. The aged counsellor offered, himself, that very night, to pursue and cut off the King before he had crossed the Jordan. That single death would close the civil war. The nation would return to her legitimate Prince, as a bride to her husband.¹ But now another adviser had appeared on the stage, — Hushai, fresh from the top of Olivet, and Hushai. with his false professions of rebellion, with his ingenious scheme for saving his royal master. He drew a picture of the extreme difficulty of following Ahithophel's counsel, and sketched the scheme of a general campaign. It shows how deeply seated was the dread of David's activity and courage, even in this decline of his fortunes, that such a counsel should have swayed the mind of the rebel Prince. It was urged with all the force of Eastern poetry. The she-bear in the open field robbed of her whelps, the wild boar² in the Jordan valley, would not be fiercer than the old King and his faithful followers. David, as of old, would be concealed in some deep cave, or on some inaccessible hill, and all pursuit would be as vain as that of Saul on the crags of Engedi. An army must be got together capable of submerging him as in a shower of dew, or of dragging the fortress in which he may have been intrenched, stone by stone, into the valley. Absalom gave way to the false counsellor, and Hushai immediately sent off his emissaries to David. Near, if not close underneath the eastern walls of Jerusalem, was a spring, known as the "fullers' spring,"³ where the two sons of Zadok and Abiathar lay ensconced, waiting for their orders for the King. Thither, like the women at Jerusalem now, came,

¹ 2 Sam. xvii. 3 (LXX.).

² Ibid. 8 (LXX.).

³ En-rogel, either the present "well

of Joab," or more probably the

"Spring of the Virgin." See EN-

ROGEL, in *Dictionary of the Bible*.

probably as it to wash or to draw water, the female slave of their fathers' house, with the secret tidings which they were to convey, urging the King to immediate flight. They crossed as fast as their swift feet could carry them over Mount Olivet. Absalom had already caught scent of them, and his runners were hard upon their track. Aside, even into the village of Bahurim, the hostile village of Shimei and Phaltiel, they darted. In it was a friendly house which they sought. In its court, they climbed down a well, over the mouth of which their host's wife spread a cloth with a heap of corn, and with an equivocal reply turned aside the pursuers. The youths hasted on down the pass, woke up the King from his sleep, called upon him to cross "the water,"¹ and before the break of day, the whole party were in safety on the farther side.

It has been conjectured with much probability that as the first sleep of that evening was commemorated in the 4th Psalm, so in the 3d is expressed the feeling of David's thankfulness at the final close of those twenty-four hours of which every detail has been handed down, as if with the consciousness of their importance at the time. He had "laid him down in peace" that night "and slept;" for in that great defection of man, "the Lord alone had caused him to dwell in safety. He had "laid down and slept and awaked, for the Lord had sustained him." The tradition of the Septuagint ascribes the 143d Psalm to the time "when his son was pursuing him." Some at least of its contents might well belong to that night. "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." "Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me

¹ So the river is apparently called, both in xvii. 20 and 21.

“to know the way wherein I should walk ; for I lift up
“my soul unto thee.”¹

There is another group of Psalms — the 41st, the 55th, the 69th, and the 109th — in which a long popular belief has seen an amplification of David's bitter cry, “O Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into “foolishness.”² Many of the circumstances agree. The dreadful imprecations in those Psalms — unequalled for vehemence in any other part of the sacred writings — correspond with the passion of David's own expressions. The greatness, too, of Ahithophel himself in the history is worthy of the importance ascribed to the object of those awful maledictions. That oracular wisdom, which made his house a kind of shrine,³ seems to move the spirit of the sacred writer with an involuntary admiration. Everywhere he is treated with a touch of awful reverence. When he dies, the interest of the plot ceases, and his death is given with a stately grandeur, quite unlike the mixture of the terrible and the contemptible which has sometimes gathered round the end of those whom the religious sentiment of mankind has placed under its ban. “When he saw that his counsel was not “followed, he saddled his ass” — the ass, on which he, like all the magnates of Israel except the royal family, made his journeys, — he mounted the southern hills, in which his native city lay — “and put his household “in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was “buried,” not like an excommunicated outcast, but like a venerable Patriarch, “in the sepulchre of his father.”

With the close of that eventful day, a cloud rests on the subsequent history of the rebellion. For three⁴

¹ Ps. cxliii. 2, 8.

² 2 Sam. xv. 31.

³ 2 Sam. xvi. 23.

⁴ Ibid. xxiv. 13 (Ewald, iii. 235).

months longer it seems to have lasted. Absalom was formally anointed King.¹ Amasa — his cousin, but by his father's side of wild² Arabian blood — took the command of the army, which, according to Hushai's counsel, had been raised from the whole country, and with this he crossed the Jordan in pursuit of the King.

David meantime was secure in the fortress of Mahanaim, the ancient Trans-Jordanic sanctuary, ^{David at Mahanaim.} which had formerly sheltered the rival house of Saul. Three potentates of that pastoral district came forward at once to his support. Shobi, the son of David's ancient friend Nahash, king of Ammon, perhaps put by David³ in his brother Hanun's place; Machir, the son of Ammiel, the former protector of Mephibosheth; Barzillai, an aged chief of vast wealth and influence, perhaps the father of Adriel, the husband of Merab.⁴ Their connection with David's enemies, whether of the house of Saul or of Ammon, was overbalanced by earlier alliances with David, or by their respect for himself personally. They brought, with the profuse liberality of Arabs, the butter, cheese, wheat, barley, flour, parched corn, beans, lentiles, pulse, honey, sheep, with which the forests and pastures of Gilead abounded, and on which the historian dwells as if he had been himself one of "the hungry and weary and thirsty" who had revelled in the delightful stores thus placed before them. "The fearfulness and trembling" which had been upon David were now over. He had fled "on the wings of a dove far away into the wilderness," and was at rest. His spirit revived within him. He arranged

¹ 2 Sam. xix. 10.

² 1 Chr. ii. 17.

³ Jerome (*Qu. Heb.* on 2 Sam. xvii. 27).

⁴ 1 Sam. xviii. 19; 2 Sam. xxi. 8.

his army into three divisions. Joab and Abishai commanded two. The third, where we might have expected to find Benaiah, was under the faithful Ittai. For a moment, the King wished to place himself at their head. But his life was worth "ten thousand men," and he accordingly remained behind in the fortress. The first battle took place in the "forest of Ephraim." The exact spot of the conflict, the origin of the name,¹ so strange on the east of the Jordan, the details of the engagement, are alike unknown. We see only the close, which has evidently been preserved from the mournful interest which it awakened in the national mind. In the interlacing thickets, so unusual on the west of the Jordan, so abundant on the east, which the Ammonite wars had made familiar to David's veterans,

the host of Absalom lost its way. Absalom riding at full speed on his royal mule, suddenly met a detachment of David's army, and darting aside through the wood, was caught by the head — possibly entangled by his long hair² — between the thick boughs of an overhanging tree, known by the name of "The Great Terebinth," swept³ off the animal, and there remained suspended. None of the ordinary soldiers ventured to attack the helpless Prince. Joab alone took upon himself the responsibility of breaking David's orders. He and his ten attendants formed a circle round the gigantic tree, enclosing its precious victim, and first by his three pikes, then by their swords, accomplished

¹ Unless it be connected with the strong fortress, apparently in the neighborhood of Bethshean, which in the later history is called Ephron (1 Macc. v. 46; 2 Macc. xii. 27). The same transformation from Ephrain to Ephron actually exists in the Text

of the Bible, in the case of a town on the west of the Jordan. See 2 Chr. xiii. 19 (Heb.), and article EPHRAIN in *Dict. of the Bible*.

² Josephus, *Ant.* vii. 10, § 2.

³ 2 Sam. xviii. 9 (Heb. and LXX.).

the bloody work. Hard by was a well-known ditch or pit, of vast dimensions. Into this the corpse was thrown, and covered by a huge mound of stones. Mussulman legends represent hell as yawning at the moment of his death beneath the feet of the unhappy Prince. The modern Jews,¹ as they pass the monument in the valley of the Kidron, to which they have given his name, have buried its sides deep in the stones which they throw against it in execration. Augustine dooms him to perdition, as a type of the Donatists. But the sacred writer is moved only to deep compassion. The thought of that sad death of the childless Prince, of the desolate cairn in the forest instead of the honored grave that he had designed for himself in the King's dale, — probably beside his beloved sheep-walks on the hills of Ephraim, — blots out the remembrance of the treason and rebellion, and every detail is given to enhance the pathos of the scene which follows.

The King sate waiting for tidings between the two gates which connected the double city of the "Two Camps" of Mahanaim. In the tower above the gates, as afterwards at Jezreel, stood a watchman, to give notice of what he saw. Two messengers, each endeavoring to outstrip the other, were seen running from the forest. The first who arrived was Ahimaaz, the fleet son of Zadok, whose peculiar mode of running² was known far and wide through the country. He had been instructed by Joab not to make himself the bearer of tidings so mournful, and — eager as he had been to fulfil his character of a good messenger, and

¹ They represent the monument to have been erected between his capture and his death. (Jerome, *Qu. Heb.* ad. loc.)

² 2 Sam. xviii. 27, and possibly 23 (Ewald, iii. 237).

dexterously as he had outstripped his forerunner by the choice of his route¹ — when it came to the point his heart failed, and he spoke only of the strange confusion in which he had left the army. At this moment the other messenger, a stranger, — probably an Ethiopian slave,² perhaps one of Joab's ten attendants, — burst in, and abruptly revealed the fatal news. The passionate burst of grief which followed is one of the best proofs of the deep and genuine affection of David's character. He rushed into the watchman's chamber over the gateway, and eight times over repeated the wail of grief for Absalom his son. It was the belief of the more merciful of the Jewish doctors that at each cry, one of the seven gates of hell rolled back, and that with the eighth, the lost spirit of Absalom was received into the place of Paradise.³ It was a sorrow which did not confine itself to words. He could not forget the hand which had slain his son. The immediate effect of his indignation was a solemn vow to supersede Joab by Amasa, and in this was laid the lasting breach between himself and his nephew, which neither the one nor the other ever forgave.⁴ The memorial of his grief was the response which it awakened in the heart of his subjects, — the lament over the winning and beautiful creature, whose charm outlived the shock even of ungrateful, ungenerous, and unsuccessful rebellion.

But stronger even than his tenderness for Absalom, was the love of David for his people, and of his people for David. He acknowledged the

The return.

¹ 2 Sam. xviii. 23, but the phrase is very obscure. *Bibliotheca Rabbinica*, ii. 127, 162. See Professor Plumptre's *Revolt of*

² "The Cushite," 2 Sam. xviii. 21, 22, 31, 32, 33 (Heb.). *Absalom*, in *Good Words*, March, 1864.

³ Ibid. 33; xix. 4. Bartolucci's ⁴ 2 Sam. xix. 13.

force of Joab's entreaty to show himself once more in public. He sent to Jerusalem to invoke the sympathy of his native tribe through the two chief Priests. He came down from the eastern hills to the banks of the Jordan. A ferry-boat, or a bridge¹ of boats, was in readiness to convey the King across the river. On that bridge, foremost in his professions of loyalty, was the savage Shimei of Bahurim, "first of the house of Joseph," grovelling in penitence, and there, in spite of Abishai's ever-recurring anger, won from David the oath of protection, which, in word at least, the King kept sacred to the end of his life. Next came the unfortunate Mephibosheth, squalid with the squalor of his untrimmed moustache,² his clothes unwashed, his nails unpared, his long hair flowing unshorn,³ and his lame feet⁴ untended, since he had wrapt himself in deep mourning on the day of his benefactor's fall. By the judgment—fair or unfair—between him and Ziba, was concluded the final amnesty with the house of Saul.⁵ There, as he turned away from the wild and hospitable chiefs who had befriended him in his exile, the King parted reluctantly from the aged Gileadite Barzillai, whom he vainly tried to tempt from his native forests to the business and the pleasures of the court of Jerusalem. Chimham the son of Barzillai took his father's place, and, with his descendants, long remained in Western Palestine a witness of the loyalty of the Eastern tribes.⁶ On the other side the river stood in order the chiefs of Judah, summoned by Zadok and

¹ 2 Sam. xix. 18; and Josephus, *Ant.* vii. 11, § 2.

² *Ibid.* 24 (Heb. and LXX.); A. V. "beard."

³ *Ibid.* and Joseph. *Ant.* vii. 11, § 3.

⁴ "Without his wooden feet," says the Jewish tradition (Jerome, *Qu. Heb.* on 2 Sam. xix. 24).

⁵ See Lecture XXI.

⁶ Jer. xli. 17. See Lecture XXVI.

Abiathar, to welcome back the "flesh of their flesh and bone of their bones," whom they had basely deserted. With them, the King entered his capital, and the Restoration of David was accomplished.¹

Three elements had been at work in the insurrection, — the personal struggle of Absalom to gain the throne, supported by the tribe of Judah; the still lingering hopes of the house of Saul and of the tribe of Benjamin, as indicated in the suspicions entertained against Mephibosheth, and the curses uttered by Shimei; and the deep-rooted feeling of Ephraim and the northern tribes against Judah, as intimated in the campaign on the other side the Jordan. Of these the first was now entirely extinguished. But the two latter — never to be entirely extinguished — burst into flame again under the guidance of Sheba, a Benjamite from the mountains of Ephraim. He is described as "a man of Belial," — a man of naught, — the usual term of invective cast to and fro,² between the various parties in the state. But he must have been already well known; the effect produced by his appearance was immense. The occasion which he seized was the loyal emulation of the northern and southern tribes in the great assembly gathered at Gilgal for the return of the King. He at that critical moment, from the midst of the crowd, blew his trumpet, and raised the cry of revolt, "To your tents, O Israel." So slight was the coherence of the tribes to the new capital, that the whole of Palestine, north of Judah, followed him. It

¹ To many English readers, the events and names of this period have acquired a double interest from the power and skill with which Dryden has made the story of "Absalom and

Abithophel" the basis of his political poem on the court of King Charles II.

² 2 Sam. xx. 1; see xvi. 7, xxii. 5, &c.

was in fact all but an anticipation of the disruption under Jeroboam. What the King feared¹ was his occupation of the fortified towns. It was in the chase after Sheba, as he went in undisturbed progress through the centre of the country, that Joab accomplished his cherished design. He had lost his high post as commander-in-chief. In the heat of the pursuit, he encountered his rival Amasa, more leisurely engaged in the same quest. At the "great stone" in Gibeon, the cousins met. Amasa rushed into the treacherous embrace to which Joab invited him, and Joab, with the same sudden stroke that had dealt the death-wound of Abner, plunged his sword, which, whether by design or accident, protruded from its sheath, deep into Amasa's bowels. Amasa fell: Joab and Abishai hurried on in their pursuit. The dead body lay soaking in a pool of blood by the road-side. As the army came up, every one halted at the ghastly sight, till the attendant whom Joab had left dragged it aside, and threw a cloth over it. Then, as if the spell was broken, they followed Joab, now once more captain of the host. He, when they overtook him, presented an aspect long afterwards remembered with horror. The blood² of Amasa had spurted all over the girdle to which the sword was attached, and the sandals on his feet were red with the stains left by the falling corpse. But, though this was not forgotten by the court or camp, for the moment all were absorbed in the chase after the rebels. It seems to have been Sheba's intention to establish himself in the fortress of Abel-Beth-Maacah, in the northwest extremity of Palestine, possibly allied to the cause of Absalom through his mother Maacah, whose name it bore, and in

¹ 2 Sam. xx. 6.

¹ Kings ii. 5. See Mr. Grove in *Dictionary of the Bible*, on ARMS.

² Ibid. xx. 10, 12, compared with

whose kingdom it was situated. It was a city famous for the prudence of its inhabitants. That prudence was put to the test on the present occasion. The same appeal was addressed to Joab's sense of the evils of an endless civil war, as before by Abner.¹ He demanded only the head of the rebel chief. It was thrown over the wall to him, and he retired, and the great catastrophe of the disruption was averted for another generation.

The closing period of David's life is marked by one more dark calamity. The occasion which led to this was the census of the people taken by Joab at the King's orders;² an attempt not unnaturally suggested by the increase of his power, but implying a confidence and pride alien to the spirit inculcated on the kings of the chosen people. The apprehension of a Nemesis on any overweening display of prosperity, if not consistent with the highest revelations of the Divine nature in the Gospel, pervades all ancient, especially all Oriental, religions. A like feeling is expressed in the Mosaic law, which at every numbering of the people enjoins that a tax or ransom shall be paid by every male, "lest there be a plague among the people;"³ and although such a census is recorded both before and afterwards without blame, yet there was evidently something in David's attitude or the circumstances of the time, which provoked an uneasy doubt in the minds of his subjects. The repugnance even of the unscrupulous Joab was such that he refused⁴ to number Levi and Benjamin. The King also hesitated to count those who were under twenty years of age, seemingly lest an

¹ 2 Sam. ii. 26.

² Ibid. xxiv. 1-9; 1 Chr. xxi. 1-7; xxvii. 23, 24.

³ Exod. xxx. 12. In the neglect

of this law, according to Josephus, *Ant.* vii. 13, § 1, consisted David's sin.

⁴ 1 Chr. xxi. 6.

exact enumeration should appear to contradict the promise of the countless multitudes¹ of Abraham's seed. The final result was never recorded in the "Chronicles"² of King David. The act which the earlier narrative ascribes directly to the prompting of God, the later Chronicler ascribes to the prompting of Satan.

A complete survey, with all the array of military camps, was set on foot, which reached to the very extremities of the kingdom, and lasted ^{The} Plague. for nearly a year. Before it was completed, almost simultaneously in David's own mind, and in the Prophetic warnings which pointed the moral of the political events of the monarchy, the sense of its wrong — whatever that might be — made itself felt. It was this time not Nathan, but Gad, who was charged with the Divine rebuke. But it is David himself who in the choice between the three calamities offered to him, utters the high Prophetic truth which finds a response in the nobler souls of every age. "Better any external calamity than those which are embittered by human violence and weakness." The judgment descended in the form of a tremendous Pestilence, — "a Death" as it is expressively termed in the original, like "the Black Death" of the middle ages. Appearing in the heat of the summer³ months, aggravated by the very greatness of the population which had occasioned the census, spreading with the rapidity of an Oriental disorder in crowded habitations, it flew from end to end of the country in three days, and at last approached Jerusalem. The new capital, the very heart of the nation, the peculiar glory of David's reign, seemed to be doomed to destruction.

1 1 Chr. xxvii. 23.

2 Ibid. 24.

3 "In the days of wheat-harvest."
(2 Sam. xxiv. 15; LXX.)

It is here that, through the many variations¹ of the two narratives which record the event, and athwart their figurative language, a scene emerges which has left its trace on the history of Jerusalem even to the present day. Immediately outside the eastern walls of the city was a spot well known as belonging to a wealthy chief of the conquered race of Jebus; one who, according to tradition,¹ was spared by David from old friendship, perhaps contracted in his wanderings, at the time of the capture of the city; who, according to the probable interpretation of the sacred text, had been the king² of the ancient Jebus. His name is variously given in the original as Aranyah, Ha-avarnah, Haornah, Araunah, and Ornan. On his property was a threshing-floor, beside a rocky cave where he and his sons were engaged in threshing the corn gathered in from the harvest.³ Above this spot is said to have appeared an awful vision, such as is described in the later days of Jerusalem, or in the pestilence of Rome under Gregory the Great, or in our own Plague of London, of a celestial Messenger stretching out a drawn sword between earth and sky over the devoted city.⁴ It was precisely at the

¹ The variations between 2 Sam. xxiv. 1-25 and 1 Chr. xxi. 1-30, are full of instruction. (1.) "The Lord provoked David," 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. "Satan provoked David," 1 Chr. xxi. 1. (2.) Joab's scruple is mentioned only in 1 Chr. xxi. 6. (3.) "Seven years' famine" in 2 Sam. xxiv. 13. "Three years' famine" in 1 Chr. xxi. 12. (4.) All the particulars of the angel's sword — the alarm of David — the alarm of Ornan — the impediment which it opposed to David's approach to Gibeon — are only in 1 Chr. xxi. 15, 16, 20, 30. (5.) "Araunah the

king" in 2 Sam. xxiv. "Ornan" and the omission of his royal dignity in 1 Chr. xxi. (6.) The descent of fire on the altar is only in 1 Chr. xxi. 26.

² 2 Sam. xxiv. 23. In the original the expression is much stronger than in the A. V. — "Araunah, the king."

³ 1 Chr. xxi. 20.

⁴ This apparition is also described in a fragment of the heathen historian Eupolemus (*Eus. Praep. Ev.* ix. 30), but is confused with the warning of Nathan against building the temple. "An angel pointed out the place

moment when David with the chiefs of Israel were moving in the penitential garb of sackcloth towards the ancient sanctuary of Gibeon,¹ that this omen deterred their advance. Beside the rocky threshing-floor the two Princes met,—the fallen King of the ^{Araunah and David.} ancient fortress, the new King of the restored capital,—each moved alike by the misfortunes of a city which in different senses belonged to each. Araunah with his four sons had hid himself in the cave which adjoined the threshing-floor, and crept out with a profound obeisance as he saw the conqueror of his race approach. David, with a feeling worthy of his noble calling, and in words which well befit the Shepherd King, entreated the concentration of the Divine judgment on himself, the only offender. “These sheep, what have they done? Let thy hand be against me and against my father’s house.” It was one of those great calamities which call out the most generous sentiments of the human heart, and out of which the most permanent religious institutions take their rise. The spot, so closely connected in the minds of both with the cessation of the pestilence, was to be consecrated by a royal altar. The Jewish King asked of his heathen predecessor the site of the threshing-floor; the Jebusite King gave with a liberality equal to the generosity with which David insisted in paying the price for it. The altar at once was invested with the most sacred sanction. The whole hill assumed from the Divine Vision the name of Moriah,² “the vision of Jehovah.” The spot itself in a few years became the site of the altar of the Temple, and therefore the

where the altar was to be, but forbade him to build the temple, as being stained with blood, and having fought many wars. His name was *Diana-than*.”

¹ 1 Chr. xxi. 28–30.

² 2 Chr. iii. 1.

centre of the national worship, with but slight interruption, for more than a thousand years, and, according to some authorities, is still preserved in the rocky platform and cave, regarded with almost idolatrous veneration, under the Mussulman "Dome of the Rock."

It was the meeting of two ages. Araunah, as he yields that spot, is the last of the Canaanites; the last of that stern old race that we discern in any individual form and character. David, as he raises that altar, is the close harbinger of the reign of Solomon, the founder of a new institution which another was to complete. Long before, he had cherished the notion of a mighty Temple which should supersede the temporary tent on Mount Zion. Two reasons were given for delay.¹ One, that the ancient nomadic form of worship was not yet to be abandoned;² the other, that David's wars³ unfitted him to be the founder of a seat of peaceful worship.⁴ But a solemn assurance was given that his dynasty should last "for ever" to continue the work.⁵ Such a founder, and the ancestor of such an immortal dynasty, was Solomon to be. We are already almost within the confines of his reign, and to this all that remains of David's life — the preparation⁶ for the Temple, the last struggle between Adonijah and Solomon⁷ — properly belong.

In the tumult and anxiety of that final contention, the aged King was released. Three versions of his latest words appear in the sacred record.

His last words.

¹ This is the subject of one of the apocryphal colloquies (Fabricius, p. 1004).

² 2 Sam. vii. 6, 7.

³ In this respect David still belonged to the older generation of heroes. (See Jerome, *Quæst. Heb.* on 2 Sam. vii. 8.)

⁴ 1 Chr. xxii. 8.

⁵ 2 Sam. vii. 13; 1 Chr. xxii. 9.

⁶ According to 1 Chr. xxii. 2-19, xxviii. 1-xxix. 19. Eupolemus (see Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* ix. 30) makes David send fleets for these stores to Elath and to Ophir.

⁷ 1 Kings i. 5 — ii. 46.

One, which no admirer of his heroic character can read without a pang, breathes the union of tender gratitude for past services with the fierce and profound vindictiveness which belongs to the worse nature of his age, his family, and his own character. Chimham and his children were specially commended to Solomon's care; but a dark legacy of long-cherished vengeance, like that which was found in the hands of the dead Constantine, was bequeathed to his successor against the aged Joab, and the aged Shimei. We need not darken the crime by adding to it the explanation of the Jewish traditions: that David, knowing by a vision the future descent of Mordecai¹ and Esther from the accursed Benjamite, had withheld the hand of Abishai till the ancestor of the future deliverers was born, and then gave up his enemy to the tender mercies of Solomon.

Another aspect of more pleasing color is given to the close of his reign in the later Chronicles, where the dying monarch is represented as starting once more² to his feet, and laying upon his son the solemn charge of completing the Temple, which he himself had not been allowed to begin. It binds together in close union the reigns of the father and the son, and throws the halo of David's glory over the more secular splendor of Solomon. "Thine is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty. . . . Both riches and honor come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all. . . . But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee. For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days

¹ Targum on Esther ii. 5. See ² 1 Chr. xxviii. 2.

MORDECAI in *Dictionary of the Bible*.

“on earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.” So speaks the religious munificence of all ages,—so speaks the founder of the Jewish Empire, and of the Jewish Temple.

There is yet a third utterance, still more emphatically and authentically stated to be “the last words of “David:” which expresses still more fully at once the light and shade, the strength and weakness, of his whole reign and character.

“David the son of Jesse,”—so he remains to the end; always with his family affections fresh and bright, his father and his early kinsmen never forgotten amidst his subsequent splendor. “The man who was raised up “on high.”—This feeling, too, never deserted him,—the sense of the marvellous change which had placed a shepherd-boy on the throne of a mighty empire. “To “be the anointed—the Messiah—of the God of Jacob.” “Anointed” by Samuel in his early youth—anointed by the chiefs of Hebron on his first accession to the throne—but through those human hands and human agencies, he sees the hand and agency of God Himself. “The God of Jacob,”—an expression which is important as showing that at that time the story of Jacob—his wanderings, his repose on God’s care—were familiar to David,¹ not without a recollection of the likeness of his life to that of the persecuted patriarch. “The sweet singer of Israel.”—“Pleasant in the songs “of Israel.” It may be that he thus describes himself as endeared to the nation through his own songs, or that he is the darling of the songs of his people, as when the maidens sang, “Saul has slain his thousands, “and David his tens of thousands.”

¹ “The generation of them that of Jacob.” “He sought a habitation seek thy face, O Jacob” (Psalm xxiv. for the mighty God of Jacob” (Ps. 6). “He vowed to the mighty God cxxxii. 2, 5).

And now comes "the prophecy," — the "divine out-pouring"¹ of his soul, —

"The Spirit of Jehovah speaks in me,
And His strains are on my tongue —
The God of Israel said to me —
The Rock of Israel spake."

It was the "Breath" or "Spirit" of JEHOVAH that passed through his frame, and His poetic "strains" that dwelt on his tongue, — the words of Him who was the ruling Force and the central Rock of the whole nation.

"He that ruleth over men justly —

Ruling in the fear of God —

So is it, as the light of the morning, at the rising of the sun —

A morning, and no clouds —

After a clear shining, after rain, tender grass springs from the earth."

This is the ideal of a just reign, — whether, as looking back upon his own, or forwards to that of Solomon.² The ruler just to men, and reverent towards God, suggests immediately the brilliant sunrise of the East: the cloudless sky above — the grass, so exquisitely green in those dry countries, immediately after rain, and glistening in the sunbeams.

But he has hardly caught this vision before, whether in prospect or retrospect, it is instantly overclouded.

"For not so is my house with God —

For an everlasting covenant He made with me, ordered in all things
and sure.

For this is all my salvation and all my desire —

Assuredly He will not cause it to grow (or 'will He not cause it to
grow?')."

It is hard to unravel these entangled sentences; yet

¹ Such is the force of the word rendered "speaks."

² See the comparison of the moral and the natural world in Ps. xix.

they doubtless present in a short compass the contrast between his hopes of what his dynasty might be,¹ and his fears of what it would be; and underneath both hopes and fears his confidence in the Divine promise which pledged to his race an eternal future. It is a prediction, but a prediction wrapt up in that undefined suspense, and that dependence on moral conditions, which so well distinguish the predictions of sacred Prophets from the predictions of Pagan soothsayers.

“But the men of ill — like scattered thorns are they all, for not with the hand does one grasp them.

And the man that shall touch them

Must be fenced with iron and the wood of spears.

And with fire they shall be burnt and burnt on the hearth.”

He turns from the apprehension for his house to the recollection of those who had troubled his own reign from first to last. “The sons of Zeruiah” have been the constant vexation of his life.² He contrasts the soft delicate green of the kingdom in its prosperity with the thorny thickets which can only be approached with axes and long pruning-hooks. These are the evil growth of the court even of a righteous king; to root and burn them out is his duty as much as the encouragement of the good.

It is a melancholy strain to close a song which begins so full of brightness and joy. But it is a true picture of the checkered life of David, and of the checkered fortunes of the ruler amongst men. It is a true picture of the “broken lights” of the human heart, whether in Judea or in England, whether of king or peasant. If there be any part of Scripture which betrays the movements of the human individual soul, it is this precious

¹ Comp. Ps. lxxxix.

² Comp. Ps. ci.

fragment of David's life. If there be any part which claims for itself, and which gives evidence of the breathing of the Spirit of God, it is this also. Such a rugged, two-edged monument is the fitting memorial of the man who was at once the King and the Prophet, the Penitent and the Saint, of the ancient Church.

David died, according to Josephus,¹ at the age of seventy. The general sentiment which forbade interment within the habitations of men, gave ^{His death.} way in his case, as in that of Samuel. He "was buried "in the city of David," — in the city which he had made his own, and which could only be honored, not polluted, by containing his grave. It was, no doubt, hewn in the rocky sides of the hill, and became the centre of the catacomb in which his descendants, the kings of Judah, were interred after him. It remained one of the landmarks of the ruined city, after the return from the Captivity, "between Siloah and the guardhouse of the "mighty men,"² — of his own faithful body-guard, and it was pointed out down to the latest times of the Jewish people. "His sepulchre is with us unto this day," says St. Peter³ at Pentecost; and Josephus⁴ states that Solomon having buried a vast treasure in the tomb, one of its chambers was broken open ^{His tomb.} by Hyrcanus, and another by Herod the Great. It is said to have fallen into ruin in the time of Hadrian.⁵ The vast cavern, with its many tombs, no doubt exists under the ruins of Jerusalem, and its discovery will close many a controversy on the topography of the Holy City. But down to this time its situation is unknown. Jerome speaks⁶ of a tomb of David, as the

¹ *Ant.* vii. 15, § 2.

² *Neh.* iii. 16.

³ *Acts* ii. 29.

⁴ *Ant.* vii. 15, § 3; xiii. 8, § 4; xvi. 7, § 1.

⁵ *Dio Cassius*, lxi. 14.

⁶ *Ep. ad Marcellam*, xli. § 12.

object of pilgrimage, but apparently in the neighborhood of Bethlehem. A large catacomb at some distance to the northwest of the city has in modern days borne the title of "the Tombs of the Kings," and has been of late years by an ingenious French traveller claimed as the royal sepulchre.¹ The only site which is actually consecrated by traditional sentiment as the Tomb of David is the vault underneath the Mussulman Mosque of David on the southern side of modern Jerusalem. The vault professes to be built above the cavern, and contains only the cenotaph, usual in the tombs of Mussulman saints, with the inscription in Arabic, "O David, "whom God has made vicar, rule² mankind in truth."

¹ In the Louvre may now be seen what M. de Saulcy believed to be the lid of David's sarcophagus (see De Saulcy, *Narrative*, &c. ii. 162-215). The main objection to this theory, apart from any archæological argument to be drawn from the character of the design or workmanship of the remains, is that these sepulchres must always have been *outside* the walls,

and therefore cannot be identified with the tomb of David, of which the peculiarity was that it was *within* the walls (see Robinson, iii. p. 253).

² See the description of a visit to the Tomb in Appendix to *Sermons in the East*, p. 149, and for the traditions, Williarus's *Holy City*, ii. 505-513.

LECTURE XXV.

THE PSALTER OF DAVID.

WE have seen how the position of David is virtually that of the Founder of the Jewish Monarchy. The character of David. In this sense his name is repeated in every possible form. "The city of David" — "The seed of David" — "The house of David" — "The key of David" — "The oath sworn unto David" — are expressions which pervade the whole subsequent history and poetry of the Old Testament, and much of the figurative language of the New. The cruelty, the self-indulgence, the too ready falsehood have appeared sufficiently in the events of his history. But there was a grace, a charm about him which entwined the affections of the nation round his person and his memory, and made him, in spite of the savage manners of the time and the wildness of his own life, at once the centre of something like a court, the head of a new civilization. He was a born king¹ of Israel by his natural gifts. His immense activity and martial spirit united him by a natural succession to the earlier chiefs of Israel, whilst his accomplishments and genius fitted him especially to exercise a vast control over the whole future greatness of the Church and commonwealth.

The force and passion of the ruder age was blended with a depth of emotion which broke out in every relation of life. Never before had there been such a faith-

¹ See Ewald, iii. 154.

ful friend, such an affectionate father. Never before had king or chief inspired such passionate loyalty, or given it back in equal degree. The tenderness of his personal affection penetrated his public life. He loved his people with a pathetic compassion, beyond even that of Moses. Even from the history we gather that the ancient fear of God was, for the first time, passing into the love of God. In the vision of David in Paradise, as related by Mohammed, he is well represented as offering up the prayer, "O Lord, grant to me the love of Thee ; grant that I may love those that love Thee ; grant that I may do the deeds that may win thy love. Make the love of Thee to be dearer to me than myself, my family, than wealth, and even than cool water." ¹

No other Jewish hero has compassed that extreme versatility of character which is so forcibly described in the striking "Song to David" written by the half-crazed English poet ² with coal on the walls of his madhouse,—

"Pleasant and various as the year" —

"Priest, champion, sage, and boy."

Jacob was the nearest approach to this complexity of character. But David, standing at a higher point of the sacred history, of necessity embraces a greater fullness of materials. He is the "man after God's own heart," not in the sense of a faultless saint, — far from it, even according to the defective standard of Jewish morality ; still further from it, if we compare ² him with the Christianity of a civilized age ; but in the sense of the man who was chosen ³ for his own special work, ⁴ —

¹ Jelaladdin, p. 288.

² Christopher Smart.

³ This is well put in Dean Milman's *History of the Jews*, i. 306.

⁴ This limited sense is evidently that of the only passage where the phrase occurs, 1 Sam. xiii. 14. The far stronger expression in 1 Kings

the work of pushing forward his nation into an entirely new position, both religious and social.

But the hold which David has fixed on the memory of the Church and the world is of a deeper kind than any which he derives even from the ^{Origin of the Psalter.} romance of his life or the attractiveness of his character. He was not only the Founder of the Monarchy, but the Founder of the Psalter. He is the first great Poet of Israel. Although before his time there had been occasional bursts of Hebrew poetry, yet David is the first who gave it its fixed place in the Israelite worship. There is no room for it in the Mosaic ritual.¹ Its absence there may be counted as a proof of the antiquity of that ritual in all its substantial features. For so mighty an innovation no less than a David was needed. That strange musical world of the East, — with its gongs, and horns, and pipes, and harps — with its wild dances and wilder contortions² — with its songs of question and answer, of strophe and antistrophe, awakening or soothing, to a degree inconceivable in our tamer West, the emotions of the hearer, were seized by the shepherd minstrel, when he mounted the throne, and were formed as his own peculiar province into a great ecclesiastical institution. The exquisite richness of verse and music so dear to him³ — “the calves of the lips” — took the place of the costly offerings of animals. His harp — or as it was called by the Greek translators, his “Psaltery,” or “Psalter,”⁴ or guitar — was to him

xv. 5 (comp. Joseph. *Ant.* vii. 7, § 3), can only be taken as an indication of the inferior morality of the Old Testament to that of the New.

¹ Ewald, i. 511.

² Two separate dances are indicated in 2 Sam. vi. 16. (See Ewald, iii. 79.)

³ Hosea, xiv. 2. Herder, *Geist Ebr. Poes.* xxxiv. 340. Compare Ps. l. 14, 23.

⁴ The name of “the Psalter,” as the title of the book, is derived from the Alexandrine MS. of the LXX. — *ψαλτήριον μετ’ ᾠδαίς*, “The Harp with Songs.”

what the wonder-working staff was to Moses, the spear to Joshua, or the sword to Gideon. It was with him in his early youth. It was at hand in the most moving escapes of his middle life. In his last words, he seemed to be himself the instrument over which the Divine breath passed.¹ Singing men and singing women were recognized accompaniments of his court.² He was "the inventor of musical instruments."³ "With his whole heart he sung songs, and loved Him that made him."⁴ United with these poetic powers was a grace so nearly akin to the Prophetic gift, that he has received the rank of a Prophet,⁵ though not actually trained or called to the office. Although, when he wished for Prophetic instructions, he applied to others, yet his own utterances are distinctly acknowledged as Prophetic.⁶ The Prophets themselves recognize his superior insight.⁷ Even amongst the most gifted of his people he was regarded as an angel of God, in his power of enduring to hear the claims alike of good and evil, in his knowledge of the universe, in the directness of his judgments, which, once spoken, could never be distorted to the right hand or⁸ the left. By these gifts he became in his life, and still more in his writings, a Prophet, a Revealer of a new world of religious truth, only inferior, if inferior, to Moses himself.

¹ 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. There is a legend which represents the harp as hung over his bed, and sounding at midnight when the north wind passed over it (HARP in *Dict. Bible*).

² Sam. xix. 35.

³ Amos vi. 3.

⁴ Ecclus. xlvii. 8; 2 Sam. xxiii. 1.

⁵ Acts ii. 30. The Mussulman traditions make him especially "the Prophet of God," as Abraham is "the

Friend," and Mohammed "the Apostle."

⁶ 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2; Ps. iv. 3, 4; xxxii. 8, 9.

⁷ 2 Sam. xii. 1 (Vulg.); xxiv. 13, 14; 1 Kings i. 27.

⁸ See the remarkable description of David's "wisdom" in 2 Sam. xiv. 17, 19, 20 (with the comments of Ewald and Thenius); comp. also 2 Sam. xix. 27.

The Psalter, thus inaugurated, opened a new door into the side of sacred literature. Hymn after hymn was added, altered, accommodated, according to the needs of the time. And not only so, but under the shelter of this irregular accretion of hymns of all ages and all occasions, other books which had no claim to be considered either of the Law or of the Prophets, forced an entrance, and were classed under the common title of "the Psalms," — though including books as unlike to each other and to the Psalter, as Ruth and Ecclesiastes, Chronicles and Daniel. But, even without reckoning these accompaniments, the Book of Psalms is, as it were,¹ a little Bible in itself. It is a Bible within a Bible; in which most of the peculiarities, inward and outward, of the rest of the sacred volume are concentrated. It has its five separate books² like the Pentateuch. It invites inquiry into the authorship of its various parts. Here, as elsewhere, the popular belief that the "Psalter of David" was entirely composed by David³ himself, has given way before the critical research which long ago detected the vast diversity of authorship existing throughout the collection. As, on the one hand, we gratefully acknowledge the single impulse which brought the book into existence, we recognize, on the other hand, no less the many illustrious poets whose works underneath that single name have come down to us, unknown, yet hardly less truly the offspring of David's mind, than had they sprung directly from

¹ "The Psalms" are regarded in the Koran (iv. 161) as the fourth sacred book,—the Pentateuch, the Gospels, and the Koran being the other three.

² See Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, Introd. p. lxxxi.

³ So Augustine and Chrysostom; just as, for a similar reason, the whole Pentateuch has been at times ascribed to Moses, the whole of the Books of Samuel to Samuel, the whole of the Book of Joshua to Joshua, or the whole of the Book of Isaiah to Isaiah.

himself. The evident accommodation¹ of many of the Psalms to the various events through which the nation passed, whilst it shows the freedom with which these sacred poems were handled by successive editors, adds to their interest by intertwining them more closely with the national history. The poetry which they contain is not Epical, but Lyrical. Epic poetry was denied to the Semitic, and reserved for the Indo-Germanic,² races. But this defect is to a great extent supplied by the ivy-like tenacity with which the growth of the Hebrew Lyrics winds itself round and round the more than Epical trunk of the Hebrew history.

The Psalter, thus freely composed, has further become the Sacred Book of the world, in a sense belonging to no other part of the Biblical records. Not only does it hold its place in the Liturgical services of the Jewish Church, not only was it used more than any other part of the Old Testament by the writers of the New, but it is in a special sense the peculiar inheritance of the Christian Church through all its different branches. “From whatever point of view any Church
Its sacred-
ness. “hath contemplated the scheme of its doctrine,
Its use by
Churches. “—by whatever name they have thought good
“to designate themselves, and however bitterly opposed
“to each other in church government or observance of
“rites,—you will find them all, by harmonious and uni-
“versal consent, adopting the Psalter as the outward
“form by which they shall express the inward feelings
“of the Christian life.”³ It was so in the earliest times. The Passover Psalms were the “Hymn”⁴ of the Last

¹ As in Psalms li. 20, 21; lx. 1-7; lxviii. 1, 12, 13, 14; and cviii. 1-7.

² Ewald, *Dichter des A. B.* p. 14.

³ Irving's *Introd. to the Psalms*, pp. 5, 6.

⁴ Matt. xxvi. 30.

Supper. In the first¹ centuries Psalms were sung at the Love-feasts, and formed the morning and evening hymns of the primitive Christians.”² “Of the other “Scriptures,” says Theodoret in the fifth century, “the “generality of men know next to nothing. But the “Psalms you will find again and again repeated in private houses, in market-places, in streets, by those who “have learned them by heart, and who soothe themselves by their Divine melody.” “When other parts “of Scripture are used,” says St. Ambrose, “there is such “a noise of talking in the church, that you cannot hear “what is said. But when the Psalter is read, all are “silent.” They were sung by the ploughmen of Palestine, in the time of Jerome; by the boatmen of Gaul, in the time of Sidonius Apollinaris. In the most barbarous of churches, the Abyssinians treat the Psalter almost as an idol, and sing it through from end to end at every funeral. In the most Protestant of churches,—the Presbyterians of Scotland, the Nonconformists of England,—“psalm-singing” has almost passed into a familiar description of their ritual. In the Churches of Rome and of England, they are daily recited, in proportions such as far exceed the reverence shown to any other portion of the Scriptures.

If we descend from Churches to individuals, there is no one book which has played so large a part in the history of so many human souls. By ^{Its use by individuals.} the Psalms, Augustine was consoled on his conversion,³ and on his death-bed. By the Psalms, Chrysostom, Athanasius, Savonarola, were cheered in persecution. With the words of a Psalm, Polycarp, Columba, Hilde-

¹ For some of these instances, see Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, Introd. pp. xxxvi. — xlix.

² Psalms lxiii. and cxli.

³ *Confessions*, ch. 9.

brand, Bernard, Francis of Assisi, Huss, Jerome of Prague, Columbus, Henry the Fifth, Edward the Sixth, Ximenes, Xavier, Melancthon, Jewell, breathed their last. So dear to Wallace¹ in his wanderings was his Psalter, that during his execution, he had it hung before him, and his eyes remained fixed upon it as the one consolation of his dying hours. The unhappy Darnley² was soothed in the toils of his enemies by the 55th Psalm. The 68th Psalm cheered Cromwell's soldiers to victory at Dunbar.³ Locke⁴ in his last days bade his friend read the Psalms aloud, and it was whilst in rapt attention to their words that the stroke of death fell upon him. Lord Burleigh⁵ selected them out of the whole Bible as his special delight. They were the framework of the devotions and of the war-cries of Luther; they were the last words that fell on the ear of his imperial enemy Charles the Fifth.⁶

Whence has arisen this universal influence? What lessons can we draw from this "natural selection" of a book of such character?

First, something is owing to its outward poetical form, and it is a matter of no small importance that this homage should have been thus extorted.

There has always been in certain minds a repug-
Its poetical
character. nance to poetry, as inconsistent with the gravity of religious feeling. It has been sometimes thought that to speak of a Book of the Bible as "poetical," is a disparagement of it. It has been in many Churches thought that the more scholastic, dry, and prosaic the forms in which religious doctrine is thrown,

¹ Tytler's *Scottish Worthies*, i. 280.

⁵ Strype's *Parker*, ii. 214.

² Froude's *England*, viii. 369.

⁶ Stirling, *Cloister-life of Charles the Fifth*, 242.

³ Carlyle's *Cromwell*, ii. 40.

⁴ Locke's *Life*, i. p. xxxix.

the more faithfully is its substance represented. Of all human compositions, the most removed from poetry are the Decrees and Articles of Faith, in which the belief of Christendom has often been enshrined as in a sanctuary. To such sentiments the towering greatness of David, the acknowledged preëminence of the Psalter, are constant rebukes. David, beyond king, soldier, or prophet, was the sweet singer of Israel. Had Raphael painted a picture of Hebrew as of European Poetry, David would have sate aloft at the summit of the Hebrew Parnassus, the Homer of Jewish song. His passionate, impetuous, wayward character, is that which in all ages has accompanied the highest gifts of musical or poetical genius. "The rapid stroke as of alternate wings," "the heaving and sinking as of the troubled heart,"¹ which have been beautifully described as the essence of the parallel structure of Hebrew verses, are exactly suited for the endless play of human feeling, and for the understanding of every age and nation. The Psalms are beyond question poetical from first to last, and he will be a bold man who shall say that a book is less inspired, or less true, or less orthodox, or less divine, because it is like the Psalms. The Prophet, in order to take root in the common life of the people, must become a Psalmist.²

Secondly, the effect of the Psalter is owing to that diversity of character, sentiment, doctrine, authorship, which we reluctantly acknowledge ^{Its diversity.} in other parts of the Bible, and in other parts of our Christian worship, but which we willingly recognize in the Psalms. In them is exemplified to the full that extraordinary complexity and variety of character and of history which we have noticed in David himself.

¹ Ewald, *Dichter des A. B.* p. 58.

² See *Ibid.* pp. 7-9.

His harp was full-stringed, and every angel of joy and of sorrow swept over the chords as he passed. For the hearts of a hundred men strove and struggled together within the narrow continent of his single heart; and will the scornful men have no sympathy for one so conditioned, but scorn him, because he ruled not with constant quietness the unruly host of divers natures which dwelt within his single soul? With the defence of his backslidings, which he hath himself more keenly scrutinized, more clearly decerned against, and more bitterly lamented than any of his censors, we do not charge ourselves, because they were, in a manner, necessary, that he might be the full-orbed man which was needed to utter every form of spiritual feeling. The Lord did not intend that His Church should be without a rule for uttering its gladness and its glory, its lamentation and its grief; and to bring such a rule and institute into being, He raised up His servant, David, as formerly He raised up Moses to give to the Church an institute of Law; and to that end He led him the round of all human conditions, that he might catch the spirit proper to every one, and utter it according to truth. He allowed him not to curtail his being by treading the round of one function; but by every variety of function He cultivated his whole being, and filled his soul with wisdom and feeling. He found him objects for every affection, that the affection might not slumber and die. He brought him up in the sheep-pastures, that the groundwork of his character might be laid amongst the simple and universal forms of feeling. He took him to the camp, and made him a conqueror, that he might be filled with nobleness of soul and ideas of glory. He placed him in the palace, that he might be filled with ideas of majesty and sovereign might. He carried him to the wilderness, and placed him in solitudes, that his soul might dwell alone in the sublime conceptions of God and His mighty works; and He kept him there for long years, with only one step between him and death, that he might be well schooled to trust and depend upon the providence of God.¹

David struck the keys of these hundred notes at once, and they have been reverberated yet more and more widely through the hundred authors whose voices he awakened after him. Solomon,² Hezekiah,³ Asaph, Heman, and Ethan,⁴ with all their followers; the exiled

¹ Irving's *Introd. Essay to Horne's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 32.

³ Isaiah xxxviii. 9; Ps. xlviii., lxxvi.

⁴ Ps. lxxiii. — lxxxiii., lxxxviii.,

² Ps. ii., lxxii.

lxxxix.

mourners by the waters of Babylon ;¹ the latest² of the Prophets; possibly the unknown minstrels³ who cheered the armies of the Maccabees, — every one of these, with King David at their head, in their various moods of thankfulness, sorrow, despair, hope, rage, love, mercy, vengeance, doubt, faith, — every one of these, through their different trials, of wanderings, escapes, captivity, banishment, bereavement, persecutions, in their quiet contemplation of nature,⁴ in the excitement⁵ of the battle-field, in the splendor of great coronations,⁶ in the solemnity of mighty funerals,⁷ — from each of these sources each has contributed to the charm which the Psalter possesses for the whole race of mankind. When Christian martyrs⁸ and Scottish covenanters⁹ in dens and caves of the earth, when French exiles¹⁰ and English fugitives¹¹ in their hiding-places during the panic of revolution or of mutiny, received a special comfort from the Psalms, it was because they found themselves literally side by side with the author in the cavern of Adullam, or on the cliffs of Engedi, or beyond the Jordan, escaping from Saul or from Absalom, from the Philistines or from

¹ Ps. cxxxvii.

² Ps. cxlvii. — cl.

³ Ps. xliv., placed by Calvin, De Wette, Perowne, under the Maccabees. See 1 Macc. iv. 24.

⁴ Ps. viii., xxix., civ.

⁵ Ps. xx., lx., cx.

⁶ Ps. xxi., xlv.

⁷ Ps. xlix., xc.

⁸ The figure of Ps. xlii. 1, often repeated in the Roman Catacombs.

⁹ Sir Patrick Hume, when, hid in the sepulchral vault, "he had no light to read by, having committed to memory Buchanan's Version of the Psalms, beguiled the weary hours of

his confinement by repeating them to himself, and, to his dying day, he could repeat every one without missing a word, and said they had been the great comfort of his life by night and day on all occasions." — *Life of Sir P. Hume by his Daughter*, p. 38.

¹⁰ So I have been told by those who fled in the Revolution of 1848.

¹¹ "There is not a day in which we do not find something in the Psalms that appears written especially for our unhappy circumstances, to meet the wants and feelings of the day." — Edwards's *Personal Narrative of the Indian Mutiny*, 145, 165.

the Assyrians. When Burleigh or Locke seemed to find an echo in the Psalms to their own calm philosophy, it was because they were listening to the strains which had proceeded from the mouth or charmed the ear of the sagacious King or the thoughtful statesman of Judah. It has been often observed that the older we grow, the more interest the Psalms possess for us, as individuals; and it may almost be said that by these multiplied associations, the older the human race grows, the more interest do they possess for mankind. Truly has this characteristic been caught by our own Hooker¹ with a critical sagacity beyond his age, as the vindication of their constant use in Christian churches.

“What is there necessary for man to know,” he asks, “which the Psalms are not able to teach? They are to beginners an easy and familiar introduction—a mighty augmentation of all virtue and knowledge in such as are matured before—a strong confirmation to the most perfect amongs others. Heroical magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience, the mysteries of God, the sufferings of Christ, the terrors of wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of Providence over this world, and the promised joys of the world to come, all good to be either known, or done, or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth. Let there be any grief or disease incident unto the soul of man, any wound or sickness named, for which there is not in this treasure-house a present comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found.”

Truly has the same sentiment been echoed by another writer, hardly less eloquent, of another Church and nation:—

¹ *Eccles. Polity*, V. xxxvii. 2.

“He only who knows the number of the waves of
 “the ocean, and the abundance of tears in the human
 “eye, He who sees the sighs of the heart, before they
 “are uttered, and who hears them still, when they are
 “hushed into silence — He alone can tell how many
 “holy emotions, how many heavenly vibrations, have
 “been produced and will ever be produced in the souls
 “of men by the reverberation of these marvellous
 “strains, of these predestinated hymns, read, medi-
 “tated, sung, in every hour of day and night, in every
 “winding of the vale of tears. The Psalter of David
 “is like a mystic harp, hung on the walls of the true
 “Zion. Under the breath of the Spirit of God, it sends
 “forth its infinite varieties of devotion, which, rolling
 “on from echo to echo, from soul to soul, awakes in each
 “a separate note, mingling in that one prolonged voice
 “of thankfulness and penitence, praise and prayer.”¹

Well said by Protestant divine : well said by Catholic prelate : but how powerful a witness, if only it could be consistently borne, to a toleration, a universal sympathy such as, outside this charmed circle, Protestant and Catholic have alike been unwilling to endure, still more unwilling to hail as one of the first privileges of the religious man.

Yet further, if from amongst these multifarious notes we select those which are peculiar to the Psalter, we shall find still deeper causes for its long preëminence, for the importance justly assigned to David, as a second Moses.² The sentiments which it contains are of the most various and unequal kind. It can plead
 no exemption from the defects of the Jewish

Its defects.

¹ *Dogme de la Pénitence*, 243 ; by Gerbet, the late Archbishop of Perpignan.

² *Comp.* p. 74, 87, 146.

system. Not even in the wars of Joshua or the song of Deborah,¹ does the vindictive spirit of the ancient dispensation burn more fiercely than in the imprecations of the 69th, 109th, and 137th Psalms. When Clovis fed his savage spirit from the 18th Psalm,² it was, we must confess, because he found there the sparks of a kindred soul. Hardly, in the silence of the Pentateuch, or the gloomy despair³ of Ecclesiastes, is the faintness of the hope of immortality more chilling than in the 30th, 49th, and 88th Psalms. Many of its excellences, too, are shared with other portions. Its stern contempt of the sacrificial system, its exaltation of the moral law above the ceremonial, are Prophetic, even more than Psalmic. Its strains⁴ of battle and victory are not equal to the rude energy of the ancient war-songs of the Judges. But there are three points in which the Psalms stand unrivalled.

The first is the depth of personal expression and experience. There are doubtless occasions when the Psalmist speaks as the organ of the nation. But he is for the most part alone with himself and with God. Each word is charged with the intensity of some grief or joy, known or unknown. If the doctrines of St. Paul derive half their force from their connection with his personal struggles, the doctrines of David⁵ also strike home and kindle a fire wherever they light, mainly because they are the sparks of the incandescence of a living human experience like our own. The Patriarchs speak as the Fathers of the chosen race; the Prophets speak as its representatives and its guides. But the Psalmist speaks as the mouthpiece of the indi-

¹ See Lectures XI., XIV.

⁴ Herder, *Geist der Ebr. Poes.*

² Ps. xviii. 39, 40. Gibbon, ch. 38. xxxiv. 301.

³ See Lectures VII., XXVIII.

⁵ See Lecture XXIV.

vidual soul, of the free, independent, solitary conscience of man everywhere.

The second of these peculiarities is, what we may call in one word, the perfect naturalness of the Psalms. It appears, perhaps, most forcibly, in their exultant freedom and joyousness of heart. It is ^{Its joyousness.} true, as Lord Bacon says, that "if you listen to David's "harp, you will hear as many hearselike airs as carols;" yet still the carols are found there more than anywhere else. "Rejoice in the Lord." . . . "Sing ye "merrily." . . . "Make a cheerful noise." . . . "Take the "psalm, bring hither the tabret, the merry harp, with "the lute." . . . "O praise the Lord, for it is a good "thing to sing praises unto our God." . . . "A joyful and "pleasant thing it is to be thankful." This in fact is the very meaning of the word "Psalm." The one Hebrew word which is their very pith and marrow is "Hallelujah." They express, if we may so say, the sacred duty of being happy. Be happy, cheerful, and thankful, as ever we can, we cannot go beyond the Psalms. They laugh, they shout, they cry, they scream for joy. There is a wild exhilaration which rings through them. They exult alike in the joy of battle, and in the calm of nature. They see God's goodness everywhere. They are not ashamed to confess it. The bright side of creation is everywhere uppermost; the dark, sentimental side is hardly ever seen. The fury of the thunder-storm, the roaring of the sea, are to them full of magnificence and delight.¹ Like the Scottish poet² in his childhood, at each successive peal they clap their hands in innocent pleasure. The affection for birds, and beasts, and plants, and sun, and moon,

¹ Ps. xxix., xciii. (see Keble's translation), civ.

² *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, i. 83. *Lyra Innocentium*, ix. 13.

and stars, is like that which St. Francis of Assisi claimed for all these fellow-creatures of God, as his brothers and sisters. There have been those for whom, on this very account, in moments of weakness and depression, the Psalms have been too much: yet not the less is this vein of sacred merriment valuable in the universal mission of the Chosen People. And the more so, because it grows out of another feeling in the Psalms, which has also jarred strangely on the minds of devout but narrow

schools, "the free and princely heart of inno-
 Its freedom. cence," which to modern religion has often seemed to savor of self-righteousness and want of proper humility. The Psalmist's bounding, buoyant hope,¹ his fearless claim to be rewarded according to his² righteous dealing, his confidence in his own integrity,³ no less than his agony over his own crimes, his passionate delight⁴ in the Law, not as a cruel enemy, but as the best of guides, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb,—these are not according to the requirements of Calvin or even of Pascal: they are from a wholly different point of the celestial compass than that which inspired the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians. But they have not the less a truth of their own, a truth to Nature, a truth to God, which the human heart will always recognize. The frank unrestrained benediction on the upright honest man, "the noblest work of God," with which the Psalter opens, is but the fitting prelude to the boundless generosity and prodigality of joy with which in its close it calls on "every creature that breathes," without stint or exception, to

¹ Ps. xvi. 9.

² Ps. xviii. 21–26.

³ Ps. xxv. 2, 21; xxvi. 1–6, 11.

⁴ Ps. xix, 8–11; cxix. (throughout).

“praise the Lord.”¹ It may be that such expressions as these owe their first impulse in part to the new epoch of national prosperity and individual energy, ushered in by David’s reign; but they have swept the mind of the Jewish nation onward towards that mighty destiny which awaited it; and they have served, though at a retarded speed, to sweep on, ever since, the whole spirit of humanity in its upward course. “The burning stream has flowed on after the furnace itself has cooled.” As of the classic writers of Greece it has been well said² that they possess a charm quite independent of their genius, in the radiance of their brilliant and youthful beauty, so it may be said of the Psalms that they possess a like charm, independent even of their depth of feeling or loftiness of doctrine. In their free and generous grace the youthful, glorious David seems to live over again with a renewed vigor. “All our fresh springs”³ are in him, and in his Psalter.

These various peculiarities of the Psalms lead us, partly by way of contrast, partly by a close though hidden connection, to their main characteristic, which appears nowhere else in the Bible with equal force, unless it be in the Life and Words of Christ Himself. The “reason why the Psalms have found such constant favor in every portion of the Christian Church, while forms of doctrine and discourse have undergone such manifold changes in order to represent the changing spirit of the age, is this, that they address themselves to the simple intuitive feelings of the renewed soul.” They represent “the freshness of the

Its spiritual life.

¹ Ps. i. 13,—cl. 6. I owe this remark to a venerable friend, than whom no one could speak on such a matter with more authority.

² Dr. Temple, “Education of the World,” *Essays and Reviews*, p. 27.

³ Ps. lxxxvii. 7.

“soul’s infancy, the love of the soul’s childhood; and, “therefore, are to the Christian what the love of parents, “the sweet affections of home, and the clinging memory “of infant scenes, are to men in general.”¹ “O God, “Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee.” “My soul “waited for Thee before the morning watch.” It is in the depth, the freshness of this spiritual life that we find the first distinct trace of a higher and more universal law² than that of Moses — of a better and more eternal life,³ than that which alone the Mosaic system revealed to man. “God is not a God of the dead, but “of the living,” was a truth which, however necessarily involved in the Pentateuch, needed the harp of David to call it into a practical existence.

I have given the other glories of the Psalms from writers of widely different Christian communions. May I venture, in speaking of this crowning glory, — of this insight which the Psalter gives into the union of the Human Soul with its Divine Friend and Creator, — to use the words of one,⁴ who perchance may be thought to have excluded himself from all these, but who has nevertheless described the phenomena of spiritual life with a force which few within that pale have equalled, and who has precisely caught that aspect of it which the Psalms most faithfully represent?

“He who begins to realize God’s majestic beauty and “eternity, and feels in contrast how little and how transitory man is, how dependent and feeble, longs to lean “upon God for support. . . . For where rather should “the weak rest than on the strong, the creature of a

¹ Irving’s *Introduction to the Psalms*, p. 7.

² Ps. xix., cxix.

³ Ps. xvi. 11; xvii. 15; lxxiii. 26.

See Herder, *Geist der Ebr. Poesie*, pp. 214–219.

⁴ F. Newman, *The Soul*, pp. 101,

104, 120.

“day than on the Eternal, the imperfect than on the
 “centre of Perfection? And where else should God
 “dwell than in the human heart?—for if God is in the
 “universe, among things inanimate and without con-
 “science, how much more ought He to dwell with our
 “souls; and our souls, too, seem to be infinite in their
 “cravings: who but He can satisfy them? Thus a
 “restless instinct agitates the soul, guiding it dimly to
 “feel that it was made for some definite but unknown
 “relation towards God. The sense of emptiness in-
 “creases to positive uneasiness, until there is an inward
 “yearning, if not shaped in words, yet in substance not
 “alien from that ancient strain,¹—‘As the hart panteth
 “after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee,
 “O God: My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the
 “living God.’ . . . Then the Soul understands and
 “knows that God is *her* God, dwelling with her more
 “closely than any creature can; yea, neither Stars, nor
 “Sea, nor smiling Nature, hold God so intimately as
 “the bosom of the Soul. He becomes the soul of the
 “soul. All nature is ransacked by the Psalmists for
 “metaphors to express this single thought, ‘God is for
 “my soul, and my soul is for God.’ Father, Brother,
 “Friend, King, Master, Shepherd, Guide, are common
 “titles. God is their Tower, their Glory, their Rock,
 “their Shield, their Sun, their Star, their Joy, their Por-
 “tion, their Trust, their Life. The Psalmist describes
 “his soul as God’s only and favorite child,² His darling
 “one. So it is that joy bursts out into praise, and all
 “things look brilliant, and hardship seems easy, and
 “duty becomes delight, and contempt is not felt, and
 “every morsel of bread is sweet. The whole world
 “seems fresh to him with sweetness before untasted.

¹ Ps. xlii. 1.

² Ps. xxii. 20.

“O, philosopher, is this all a dream? Thou canst explain it all? Thou scornest it all? But it is not less “a fact of human nature — and of some age too — for “David thirsted after God, and exceedingly rejoiced “in Him; and so did Paul, and so have hundreds “since.”

And may we add, in all humility, O Christian, who hearest these things in the Psalms, hast thou ever felt them, or felt anything like them? Hast thou, with the light of the Gospel, fallen below the Hebrew Psalmist? Canst thou enter into that belief, so scanty, so undefined, yet so intense, which made him repose in unshaken faith on the truth and goodness of God? Canst thou believe that those sacred words are intended to nerve thy heart against the snares of sin, the love of popularity, the respect of persons, the want of faith in Truth, the pressure of sorrow, and sickness, and death? “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none “upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee. My “flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength “of my heart, and my portion for ever.”¹ “Put thou “thy trust in the Lord, and be doing good; leave off “from wrath, and let go displeasure, else shalt thou be “moved to do evil.” “Commit thy way unto the Lord, “and put thy trust in Him.” “He shall make thy righteousness as clear as the light, and thy just dealing as “the noonday.” “The Lord ordereth a good man’s “going. Though he fall he shall not be cast away, for “the Lord upholdeth him with His hand.”²

Thus far the causes of the sacredness of the Psalter are such as all might recognize, Jew, and we may almost add Pagan, as well as Christian. But as we contemplate

¹ Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26.

² Ps. xxxvii. 3, 5, 23, 24.

David in himself and as the inaugurator of this new revelation to man, a further question has risen. The glory of David carried with it a pledge of ^{Its Messianic hopes.} the continuance of his dynasty to the remotest ages of which Jewish imagination could conceive. This fixed belief in the eternity of the House of David, of which the Psalms are the earliest and the most constant expression, has had its faint counterpart in those yearnings which in other countries have suggested the return of the beloved sovereign himself; — Arthur of Britain, Henry of Portugal, Frederick Barbarossa of Germany. But the Jewish belief had a far deeper basis. When the decline of David's royal race appeared to extinguish the hopes that were bound up with it, instead of vanishing away, like those popular fancies just mentioned, the expectation of the Jewish Church sprang up in a new form, and with increased vitality. It fastened, not as before¹ on the ruined and exiled dynasty, nor yet, as occasionally, on the actual person² of David, but on the coming of One who should be a Son of David, and restore the shattered throne, and build up again³ the original tent or hut which David had pitched on his first entrance into Jerusalem. This expectation of "a Son of David" who should revive the fallen splendor of his father's house, blended with the general hope of restoration peculiar to the Jewish race, reached the highest pitch a thousand years after David's death. Suddenly there came One, to whom, though He did not desire the name for Himself, it was given freely by others. He is repeatedly called the Son of David.⁴ Most unlike, in-

¹ 2 Sam. vii. 19; xxiii. 5.

xxix. 1, Lam. ii. 6, Ps. lxxvi. 2,

² Ps. lxxxix. 20, 49; cxxxii. 10, 17; Judith ix. 8.

Ezekiel xxxvii. 24, 25.

⁴ Matt. ix. 27; Mark x. 47; Luke

³ Amos ix. 11; Isaiah xvi. 5. Comp. xviii. 38, &c.

deed, to that fierce, indulgent, passionate king, that wayward, eager, exuberant poet, most unlike to many of the wild imprecations¹ in the Psalms themselves, yet in those peculiar features of the Psalmist, of which we have spoken, so like, that when we read his emotions, we seem to be reading — and the Christian Church from the earliest times has delighted to read — the emotions, the devotions, the life, of Christ Himself. That natural, unrestrained, at times joyous and victorious spirit which animates the Psalter, is never reproduced in any other religious teacher, inside or outside the circle of the Sacred History, except in Him “who came eating and drinking,” the Bridegroom, and the Bridegroom’s Guest, the Friend of the childlike, the simple, the genuine. The compassion for the suffering nation; the generous sympathy with the oppressed and the outcast; the chivalrous thoughtfulness (contrasted, in David’s case, with the cruel craft that occasionally disfigures his character) — meet nowhere else in Jewish history so remarkably as in the hero of Adullam and Engedi, and in Him who lived with the publicans and sinners, and wept over Jerusalem, and forgave His enemies. That wide diversity of thought and situation which marked the career of David, the sudden vicissitudes from obscurity to fame, from fame to ignominy, — that rapid passage through all the feelings of humanity, which we trace through the variegated texture of the Psalter, constitute, in no scanty measure, the framework of the great drama of the Gospel History. And with this variety of outward condition is combined the inward feeling of absolute unity of the soul with God, which constitutes, as we have seen, the main characteristic of the Religion of the Psalter, but of which we

¹ Comp. Baxter, *Paraphrase of the New Testament*, p. vi.

have the perfect expression in the Mind of Christ. We need not invoke any of the abstract theological statements respecting Him. It is enough to take the most purely historical view that has ever been expressed. "God speaks not to Him," it has been well said by such a critic, "as to one outside of Himself: God is in Him." "He feels Himself with God, and He draws from His own heart what He tells us of His Father. He lives in the bosom of God by the intercommunion of every moment." And therefore it is that, when in the Psalms of David we are carried along with their burning words, down to the lowest depths of grief, and up to the highest heights of glory, we feel all the while, that through those words we are one¹ with Christ, and He is one with us: we are admitted — not by any fanciful straining of words, or by any doubtful application of minute predictions, but by the real likeness of spirit with spirit—into the depths of that communion, wherein He is one with His Father. It may be that the magnificent language of the Psalter at times rises into meanings which can only be fully understood in its highest and most universal application. It may be allowable, for those who so wish, to merge altogether the historical circumstances of the book in its moral and religious lessons. But the fact still remains, that it is through the likeness of situation and feeling, and through this alone, that the connection of the words of the original author with Christ, and with the Christian Church, has been maintained and perpetuated. The Psalter is especially prophetic of Christ, because, more than any other part of the ancient Scriptures, it enters into those truths of the spiritual life of which He was the great

¹ This true ground of the Messianic idea of the Psalter is well brought out in Irving's *Introduction to the Psalms*, 37, 38.

Revealer. David and his fellow-Psalmists, are types, that is, likenesses, of Christ, because they, more than any other characters of the Sacred History, share in the common feelings and vicissitudes of life and death, failure and success, through which He and they and we — but He in the highest and most transcendent of all senses — win the hope which is in those Psalms for the first time set before the mind of man.

SOLOMON.



- XXVI. THE EMPIRE OF SOLOMON.
- XXVII. THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON.
- XXVIII. THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON.

LECTURE XXVI.

SPECIAL AUTHORITIES FOR THIS PERIOD.

I. The contemporary accounts contained in

1. The "Book of the Acts" (or Words) of Solomon (1 Kings xi. 41).
2. The "Book" (*i. e.* the Words or Acts) of the Prophet Nathan (2 Chr. ix. 29).
3. The "Prophecy" of Ahijah the Shilonite (*ibid.*).
4. The "Visions" of Iddo the Seer (*ibid.*).

Of these some materials are probably preserved in the accounts of the two historical books of the Old Testament (1 Kings i. 1 — xi. 43 1 Chr. xxviii. 1—2 Chr. ix. 31), and of Ecclus. xlvii. 13—23.

II. The contemporary literature of the reign of Solomon.

1. The writings of Solomon himself (1 Kings iv. 32, 33).
 - (a.) Three thousand proverbs.
 - (b.) One thousand and five songs.
 - (c.) "Words" (works) on Natural History.

Of these some parts are preserved to us either actually or by imitation in the three books which bear the name of Solomon.

1. "The Proverbs" (i. — xxix.).
2. "The Song of Solomon," or "The Song of Songs."
3. "Ecclesiastes" or "The Preacher" (Heb. *Kohleleth*).

To these add the Psalms sometimes connected with him : Ps. ii., xlv., lxxii., cxxvii.

III. Books or traditions extraneous to the Canon.

1. His Deutero-canonical or apocryphal writings.

(a.) The *Wisdom of Solomon*, in the person of Solomon, but apparently by an Alexandrian Jew.

(This and *Ecclesiasticus* follow in the LXX. and Vulgate, immediately on the three Proto-canonical books of Solomon, and with these are called "The five books of Wisdom.")

(b.) The *Psalter of Solomon*. Eighteen Psalms which once stood in the Alexandrine MS. at the end of the New Testament,

following the Epistles of Clemens Romanus, as appears from the index. They have been published from a MS. in the Augsburg Library by De la Cerda. (Fabricius, *Codex Pseudepigraphus Vet. Test.* 914-999.) See Lecture XXVIII.

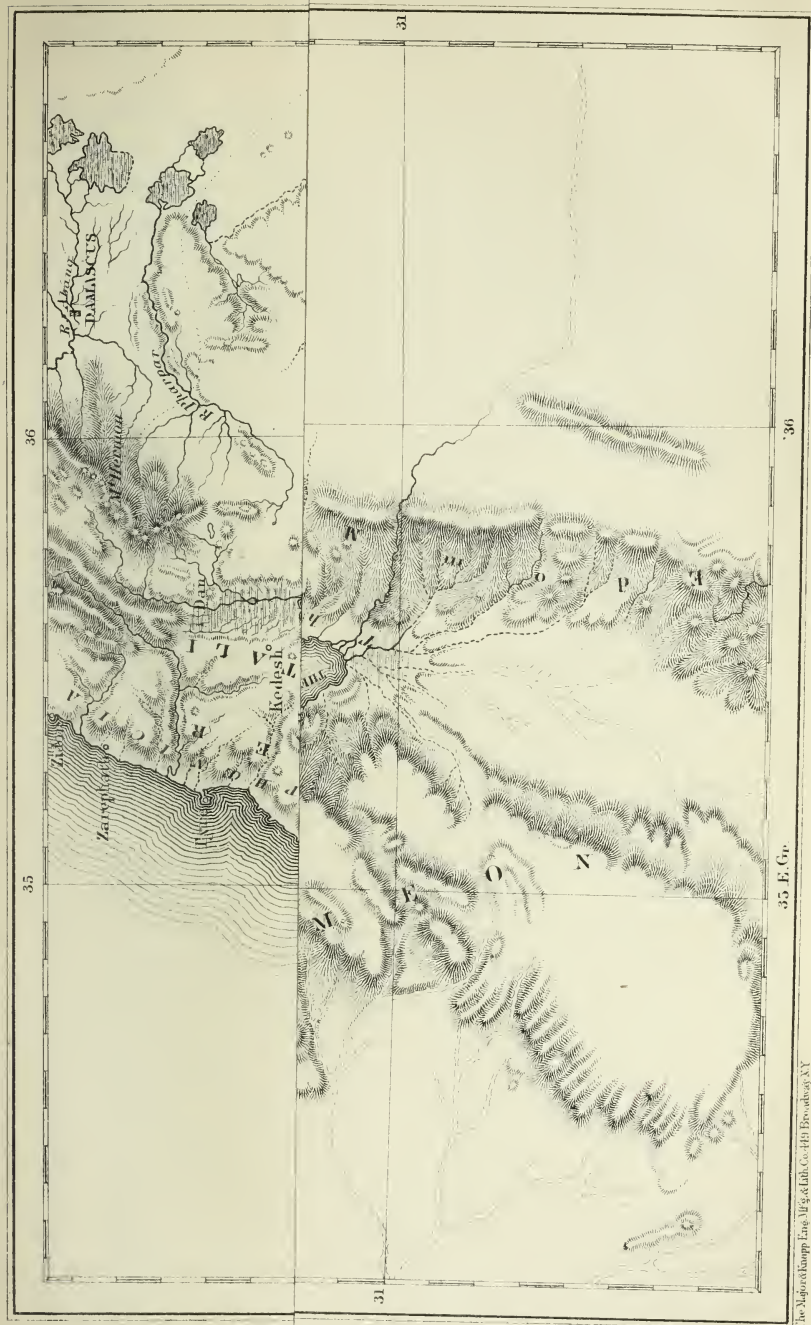
- (c.) Correspondence between Solomon and Vaphres, King of Egypt, preserved by Eupolemus (Eusebius, *Præp. Ev.* ix. 31, 32).
 - (d.) Correspondence of Solomon and Hiram of Tyre.
 - (a) Letters preserved by Eupolemus (Eusebius, *Præp. Ev.* ix. 33, 34, and Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 2, § 6, 7, 8), of which the copies apparently existed both at Tyre and Jerusalem in the time of Josephus.
 - (β) Riddles, mentioned by Menander and Dios, the Phœnician historians (Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 5, § 3, and *c. Apion*, i. 17, 18; Theophilus Antioch. *ad Autolyicum*, iii. p. 131, 132).
 - (e.) Charms, seals, &c., of Solomon, alluded to by Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 2, § 5 (see also Pineda, *De Rebus Salomonis*; and Fabricius, *Codex Pseudepigraphus Vet. Test.* p. 1031-1057).
2. Later traditions of his history.
- (a.) In Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 1-7.
 - (b.) In the Arabian stories (Koran, xxii. 15-19, xxvii. 20-45, xxviii. 29-39, xxxiv. 11-13 (with the amplifications in Lane's *Selections*, p. 232-262); D'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale*, "Soliman ben-Daoud"; Weil's *Biblical Legends*, p. 171-215.
 - (c.) In Eupolemus (Eusebius, *Præp. Ev.* ix. 31, 34).

LECTURE XXVI.

THE EMPIRE OF SOLOMON.

SOLOMON, the third king of Israel, is as unlike either of his predecessors as each of them is unlike the other. The age of Solomon. No person occupies so large a space in Sacred History, of whom so few personal incidents are related. That stately and melancholy figure—in some respects the grandest and the saddest in the sacred volume—is, in detail, little more than a mighty shadow. But on the other hand, of his age, of his court, of his works, we know more than of any other. Now, for the first time since the Exodus, we find distinct traces of dates—years, months, days. Now at last we seem to come across monuments, which possibly remain to this day. Of the earlier ages of Jewish history, nothing has lasted to our time except it be the sepulchres and wells,—works of Nature rather than of men. But it is not beyond belief that the massive walls at the reservoirs near Bethlehem, the substructures of the temple at Jerusalem, and at Baalbec, are from the age of Solomon. Now also we come within certain signs of contemporary history in the outer world. In the reign of Solomon we at last meet with an Egyptian sovereign, designated by his proper name—Shishak—and in his still-existing portraiture on the walls of Karnac, we have thus the first distinct image of one who beyond question had communicated with the chosen people. Now also the date to which we have

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PALESTINE DURING THE MONARCHY



attained, the thousandth year before the Christian era, brings us to a level with the beginning of the well-known Classical History of Greece and Italy.

But the epoch is remarkable not only for its distinctness, but for its splendor. It is characteristic indeed of the Jewish records that, clearly as Solomon's greatness is portrayed at the time, it is rarely noticed in them again. Of all the characters of the Sacred History, he is the most purely secular; and merely secular magnificence was an excrescence, not a native growth, of the chosen people. Whilst Moses and David are often mentioned again in the sacred books, Solomon's name hardly occurs after the close of his reign. But his fame ran, as it were, underground amongst the traditions of his own people and of the East generally. The Greek form which the Hebrew name of Solomon assumes is of itself a singular tribute to the lofty associations with which it was invested. "Alexander," the name of the greatest king of the Gentile world in Eastern ears, was in after days thought by the Jews to be the fitting Western version of the name of the greatest king of the Jewish world. "Alexander Balas," "Alexander Janæus," — the Alexanders at the time of the Christian era, — are merely so many Solomons. The same analogy spread even to the feminine name; and *Alexandra*, which hardly ever occurs¹ in Grecian nomenclature, was a common Jewish, and hence has become a Christian, name, from being held to be the equivalent of the Hebrew *Salome*. In the Mussulman stories his name has a still wider circulation. Suleymân (in its diminutive form of endearment — "Little Solomon") became the favorite title of Arabian and Turkish princes, and the sense of his being the ideal and prototype of all

¹ Only as a synonym for the prophetess *Cassandra*.

great kings is shown in the strange belief that the forty sovereigns who ruled over the world before the creation of man were all Solimans. Their history was recounted by the Bird of Ages, the Simorg, who had served them all; and their statues, monstrous Pre-Adamite forms, were supposed to exist in the mountains of Kaf, where a sacred shield descended from each to each.¹

He is the true type of an Asiatic monarch. "Europe," says Hegel,² "could never have had a Solomon." But of the potentates of Asia, he is the one example with which Europe is most familiar.

And, although his secular aspect has withdrawn him from the religious interest which attaches to many others of the Jewish saints and heroes, yet in this very circumstance there are points of attraction indispensable to the development of the Sacred History. It enables us to study his reign more freely than is possible in the case of the more purely religious characters of the Bible. He is, in a still more exact sense than his father, "one of the great men of the earth"³—and, as such, we can deal with his history, as we should with theirs. It thus serves as a connecting link between the common and the Sacred world. To have had many such characters in the Biblical History would have brought it down too nearly to the ordinary level. But to have one such is necessary to show that the interest which we inevitably feel in such events and such men has a place in the designs of Providence, and in the lessons of Revelation. In Solomon, too, we find the first beginnings of that wider view which ended at last in the expansion of Judaism into Christianity. His reign contains the first historical record of the contact between Western Europe

¹ D'Herbelot, "Soliman ben-Daoud."

² *Philosophie der Geschichte*, 151.

³ See Lecture XXIII.

and Eastern India. In his fearless encouragement of ecclesiastical architecture is the first sanction of the employment of art in the service of a true Religion. In his writings and in the literature which springs from them, is the only Hebrew counterpart to the philosophy of Greece. For all these reasons, there is in him a likeness, one-sided indeed, of "the Son of David," in whom East and West, philosophy and religion, were reconciled together.¹

Solomon was the second son of David and Bathsheba. There is something more than usually significant in his names, arising probably from the ^{His name.} peculiar circumstances of his birth. His first name was Jedidiah, "beloved by Jehovah," said to have been given, perhaps by Nathan, as a sign of David's forgiveness — "because Jehovah loved him."² It is the sanctification of the name of David³ — the "darling" becomes "Jehovah's Darling." That by which he was afterwards known was Shelômoh,⁴ "The Peaceful" (corresponding to the German "Friedrich"), in contrast to David's wars, possibly in connection with the great peace at the time of his birth.⁵ In one version of David's address to Solomon, he tells his son that his birth had been predicted at the time when, after the capture of Jerusalem, he had first meditated the building of the Temple, and that the significance of his career had already been intimated. "Behold a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be Shelômoh (peaceful); and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in

¹ See Lecture XXVIII.

⁴ Σαλώμων of the LXX. is shortened

² 2 Sam. xii. 25; Neh. xiii. 26. into Σολόμων in the N. T., whence Possibly Ps. cxxvii. 3. Compare the our "Sôlomon." change of Hoshea to Joshua.

⁵ See Lecture XXII.

³ See JEDIDIAH in *Dict. of Bible*.

“his day. He shall build an house for My name; and “he shall be My son, and I his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever.”¹

Nothing is known of his youth, unless it be that he was brought up by Nathan,² and that after the death of the two eldest and best beloved of David’s earlier sons, Ammon and Absalom, he must have been regarded as the heir. He was Bathsheba’s favorite son, “tender and only beloved in the sight of his “mother,”³ and Bathsheba, we cannot doubt, was David’s favorite wife, and to her David had pledged her son’s accession by a solemn and separate oath.⁴

But another son, in point of age, came next after Absalom — Adonijah, the son of Haggith. Of his mother we know nothing but her name, “the Dancer.” Like Absalom, he was remarkable for his personal beauty; and, like Absalom, he was dear to his father’s heart. From the days of his early childhood at Hebron, it had been observed that the King had never put any restraint upon him,—never had said, “Why hast thou done so?”⁵ He, as his father’s end approached, determined to anticipate the vacancy of the throne by seizing upon it himself.⁶ What hidden springs were at work — how far (as seems implied) the new concubine of the aged King, Abishag the Shunammite, was in Adonijah’s favor — whether, as has been

¹ 1 Chron. xxii. 9.

² 2 Sam. xii. 25, or (1 Chr. xxvii. 32) by Jehiel.

³ Prov. iv. 3. For some ingenious conjectures as to the unfavorable influences at work on his early education, see Professor Plumptre in the *Dict. of the Bible*, article SOLOMON.

⁴ 1 Kings i. 13, 17, 30. According

to the Jewish tradition, after the death of the first child (Jerome on 2 Sam. xii.).

⁵ 1 Kings i. 6.

⁶ “The Shah of Persia, at the beginning of this century, had sixty sons, all brought up by their mothers with the hope of succeeding” (Morier).

conjectured, she was the beautiful Shulamite of the Canticles — whether Adonijah had already professed for her that affection which he openly avowed after his father's death — are amongst the secrets of the Harem of Jerusalem, of which only a few hints transpire, to awaken without satisfying our curiosity.¹ He took precisely the same course that had been adopted by Absalom. He assumed the royal state and the same number of runners to clear the streets, and the same unwonted addition of horses to his chariots.² As Absalom had won over Ahithophel, so he won over the two chief amongst the older advisers of the King, each of whom probably had his own cause of quarrel. Abiathar's reasons for disaffection we can only infer from the rising favor of Zadok. Joab, as we have already seen, had more than one deep resentment brooding in his breast, and there is something mournful in the sigh that the sacred historian heaves over the events which, at the close of his long life, at last broke the unshaken loyalty of the venerable soldier. "Though he had not "turned after Absalom,³ he turned after Adonijah." The other Princes, his brothers, also joined him. If they were all living at this time, they were no less than fifteen in number. These, with the "King's servants," must have made a formidable band. The rendezvous was at a huge stone, — "the stone of serpents," — near the spring of En-rogel,⁴ where afterwards were the royal

¹ See this suggested by Mr. Grove, in the *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. SHULAMITE, and curiously worked out by Professor Plumptre.

² "The runners (*Shattir*) before the king's horse in Persia are indispensable to the royal state. They go in a line two and two, the chief by the king's stirrups" (Morier).

³ 1 Kings ii. 28, or, less impressively, in the Vatican MS. of the LXX. and Josephus (*Ant.* viii. 1, § 4); "He turned not after Solomon."

⁴ It is doubtful whether this was the present "Fountain of the Virgin," or the well now called after Job or Joab. (See Lect. XXIV.) If the latter, the name may possibly be

gardens, and where they would have at once a natural altar for the sacrificial feast, and water for the necessary ablutions. In this general disaffection there remained faithful to the cause of Solomon — “the mighty men;” “the body-guard;” two high personages obscurely indicated as Shimei¹ and Rei;² Zadok, the younger Chief Priest, who also had a prophetic gift, and was known as “the seer;”³ and above all, Solomon’s preceptor, the Prophet Nathan, who, now that Gad (as it seems) was dead, remained the chief representative of the Prophetic order. He, with Bathsheba, succeeded in rousing the languid energies of the aged King, who threw the whole weight of his great name into the scale of Solomon, and advised the course to be pursued.

The boy Prince was mounted on the royal mule, and, accompanied by Nathan, and by Benaiah, the priestly head of the royal guard, went down from the palace to Gihon.⁴ Zadok was present with the sacred oil, which, as Priest at the sanctuary at Gibeon, was in his custody,⁵ and poured it on the young man’s head, Nathan assisting in the ceremony, as Prophet.⁶ Then Zadok⁷ blew his sacred ram’s horn, the trumpeters of the guard followed, as was from this time forward the custom at the inauguration of kings,⁸ with a loud blast which announced to the assembled concourse the event which had just occurred. A shout went up, — “Long live King Solomon!” amidst the

taken from Joab in connection with this incident.

¹ Either the famous Benjamite, or more probably Shimeah, David’s second brother, and Solomon’s uncle.

² According to Jewish traditions, the same as Ira; according to Ewald, Raddai, David’s fifth brother.

³ 2 Sam. xv. 27.

⁴ Probably *Siloam*.

⁵ LXX. 1 Kings i. 39, 45.

⁶ “In Persia, the *Mushtched* or chief ecclesiastical functionary is there to gird on the sword; the *Munajem*, the prophet or astrologer, is there to fix the fortunate hour” (Morier).

⁷ 1 Kings i. 39 (LXX.).

⁸ 2 Kings ix. 13; xi. 14.

acclamations of the multitude, who expressed their joy, after the manner of Orientals, in wild music and vehement dancing.¹ He was brought into the palace, and formally seated on the royal "throne,"² and henceforth was addressed as "King."³ The guests then entered the presence of David, and in the form of Eastern benediction said, "God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne;" and the aged King, in spite of his infirmities, prostrated himself in acquiescence on his bed.⁴

The same trumpet-note which had roused the enthusiasm of the citizens of Jerusalem had startled the conspirators at Adonijah's feast. It struck on the watchful and experienced ear of Joab, and the next moment there rushed in upon them Jonathan, the son of the rebel Priest Abiathar, he who in the revolt of Absalom had been employed as a spy and a messenger, probably from the same qualities which made him on this day the first bearer of evil tidings. The festivities were broken off. Adonijah fled to the altar for refuge. His proposal to have Abishag for his wife, after his father's death, whether prompted by affection, or, as Solomon interpreted it, ambition, brought him shortly after to his end. And in the same ruin were involved the aged priest and warrior who had shared his fortunes. Abiathar was by the sovereign act of Solomon deposed from his office; a momentary reminiscence of the great day, when he had stood by David with the ark on Olivet, caused his life to be spared for the time, but only for the time.⁵ He spent the short remnant of his days on his property at Anathoth, and with him expired the last

¹ 1 Kings i. 40 (Heb. and LXX.).

² Ibid. i. 46. Comp. ii. 12, 19; i.

30, 35, 37, 48.

³ 1 Kings i. 39, 51, 53.

⁴ Ibid. i. 47.

⁵ Ibid. ii. 26.

glory of the house of Eli. His descendants might be seen prowling about the sanctuary, which their ancestors had once ruled, begging from their fortunate rivals a piece of silver¹ or a cake of bread. Joab fled up the steep ascent of Gibeon, and clung to the ancient brazen altar which stood in front of the Sacred Tent. The same disregard of ceremonial sanctity which the King had shown in deposing the venerable Abiathar, he now showed by deciding that even the sacredness of the altar was not to protect the man who had reeked with the blood of Abner and Amasa; and, accordingly, the white-headed² warrior of a hundred fights, with his hands still clasping the consecrated structure, was executed by the hands of his ancient comrade Benaiah. The body was buried in funeral state at his own property in the hills overhanging the Jordan valley.³ Last of all, partly by his own rashness, perished the formidable neighbor, the aged Shimei,⁴ of the house of Saul. The mind of Christian Europe instinctively shudders at this cold-blooded vengeance on crimes long forgiven; yet it may be that in the silent approbation of Solomon's policy which the sacred narrative conveys, there is something of the same feeling which, translated into our language, bids us, in spite of our natural sentiments of pity and reverence, "not spare the hoary head of "inveterate abuse."⁵

It was this rapid suppression of all resistance that was known in the formal language of the time as the "Establishment" or "Enthronization" of Solomon. As David's oath had been, in allusion to the troubles of his

¹ 1 Kings ii. 27; 1 Sam. ii. 36.

² Ibid. ii. 6.

³ Ibid. ii. 28-34. Comp. 2 Sam. ii. 32.

⁴ 1 Kings ii. 9, 42. (Ewald, iii. 272.)

⁵ Burke, as quoted in Strachey's *Hebrew Politics*, p. 131.

early life, As the Lord liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of "distress," — so the oath of Solomon, in allusion to this signal entrance on his new reign, was, "As the Lord liveth, which hath *established* me, and *set* *me* on the throne of David my father,"¹ without a rival or rebel to contest it.

It was probably on the occasion of his final anointing or inauguration on Mount Zion, that through Nathan, or through Zadok, the oracle was delivered, to which allusion is made in the second Psalm, —

"I have anointed My king
On Zion, My holy mountain."²

It was like a battle fought and won, of the new permanent organization of the monarchy over the wild anarchical elements of the older system that had still lingered in the reign of David. Joab, the Douglas of the house of David, was like a Douglas slain; with the fall of Shimei, perished the last bitter representative of the rival house of Saul; the Chief Priest Abiathar, last of the house of Eli, was the last possessor of the now obsolete oracle of Urim and Thummim, the last survivor of David's early companions; the young King triumphed over all the ancient factions of Israel, and in him triumphed the cause of monarchy and of civilization for all coming time. It is fitting that from this accession — the first hereditary accession to the throne of Israel — should have been copied and descended even to our own day, the ceremonial of the coronation of Christian sovereigns — the coronation anthem, the enthronization, the trumpets, the wild acclamations, even the Eastern anointing.³

¹ 1 Kings ii. 24; compare i. 17, 30; ii. 12, 45, 46.

² Ps. ii. 6, 7. (See Ewald.)

³ The anointing of the Jewish kings is recorded only when the succession was contested.

This wonderful calm must have been rendered doubly striking, if he was, as is most probable, but a mere boy at this time — fifteen according to one tradition, twelve according to another — in appearance, if not in years, “a little child,” “young and tender.”¹ To this combination of incidents belongs the only narrative which exhibits his personal character. It contains in a lively form the prelude of the coming reign.

The national worship was still in the unsettled state in which it had been since the first entrance ^{His visit to Gibeon.} into Palestine. “The people sacrificed in high-places.” David himself had “worshipped” on the top of Olivet.² The two main objects of special reverence were parted asunder. The ark stood in a temporary tent within David’s fortress on Mount Zion. The chief local sanctity still adhered to the spot where “the Tabernacle of the Congregation” stood, on what was called “the great high-place of Gibeon.” This was the lofty eminence which overlooks the whole of Judea, in modern times known by the name of “the Prophet Samuel.”³ On the summit of this mountain was “the Tabernacle of the Congregation,” — the ancient Tent of the Wanderings. In front of it rose the venerable structure of the brazen altar, wrought by the hands of the earliest Israelite artist, Bezaleel, the grandson of Hur. In this Tabernacle ministered the Chief Priest Zadok, who had thence brought the sacred oil for the inauguration of Solomon, and who was now the sole representative of the Araonic family. Hither,⁴ therefore,

¹ 1 Kings iii. 7; 1 Chron. xxix. 1. According to 1 Kings xi. 42, xiv. 21, he could not have been less than twenty. But Josephus (*Ant.* viii. 7, § 8) makes him fifteen, Eupolemus (*Euseb. Præp. Ev.* ix. 30) twelve.

² 1 Kings iii. 2; 2 Sam. xv. 32. See Lecture XXXVII.

³ *Neby Samwil.*

⁴ Josephus (*Ant.* viii. 2, § 1) has “Hebron.” He makes the same change in *Ant.* x. 9, § ; comp. *Jer.* xli. 12.

as on a solemn pilgrimage, with a vast concourse of dignitaries, the young King came to offer royal sacrifices on his accession. A thousand victims were consumed on the ancient altar. The night was spent within the sacred city of Gibeon.¹ And now occurred one of those prophetic dreams which had already been the means of Divine communication in the time of Samuel. Thrice in Solomon's life — at the three epochs of his rise, of his climax, of his fall — is such a warning recorded. This was the first. It was the choice offered to the youthful King on the threshold of life, — the choice, so often imagined in fiction, and actually presented in real life, — “Ask what I shall give thee.” The answer is the ideal answer of such a Prince, burdened with the responsibility of his position. He remembered the high antecedents of his predecessor — “Thou hast showed unto thy servant David, my father, great mercy, according as he walked before Thee in truth, and in uprightness, and in righteousness of heart with thee.” He remembered his own youth and weakness; “I am but a little child — I know not how to go out or to come in.” He remembered the vastness of his charge; “In the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen: a great people which cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude: and who is able to judge this thy people that is so great.” He made the demand for the gift which he of all the heroes of the ancient Church was the first to claim: “Give thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad.”²

¹ Thenius conjectures that we should read *Gibeon* for *Gihon* in 1 Kings i. 33, 38, 45. This would doubtless agree well with 2 Chron. i. 3, but is hardly consistent with the expressions in 1 Kings i. 33 (“bring down”), and 41 (“heard the ram’s horn”).

² 1 Kings iii. 5–10; 2 Chr. i. 7–10.

He showed his wisdom by asking for wisdom. He became wise, because he had set his heart upon it. This was to him the special aspect through which the Divine Spirit was to be approached, and grasped, and made to bear on the wants of men; not the highest, not the choice of David, not the choice of Isaiah; but still the choice of Solomon. "He awoke and behold it was "a dream." But the fulfilment of it belonged to actual life.

From the height of Gibeon,¹ the King returned to complete the festival of his accession before the other monument of the Mosaic Religion — the Ark, at Jerusalem. It was in the midst of these sacrificial solemnities that his gift of judicial insight was first publicly attested. Every part of the incident is characteristic.² The two mothers, degraded as was their condition, came, as the Eastern stories so constantly tell of the humblest classes, to demand justice from the King. He patiently listens; the people stand by,³ wondering what the childlike sovereign will determine. The mother of the living child tells her tale with all the plaintiveness and particularity of truth; and describes how, as she "looked at him again and again, behold, it "was not my son which I did bear." The King determines, by throwing himself upon the instincts of nature, to cut asunder the sophistry of argument. The living child⁴ was to be divided — and the one half given to one, the other half to the other. The true mother betrays her affection: "O my lord, give her the living "babe (the word is peculiar), and in no wise slay it."

¹ It is just possible that the Wady Suleyman, which runs down from Gibeon towards the maritime plain, may have received its name from this visit.

² 1 Kings iii. 16–28 (Heb.). The story is omitted in 2 Chr. i. 13.

³ Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 2, § 2.

⁴ Or the two children, Josephus, (*ibid.*).

The King repeats, word for word, the cry of the mother, as if questioning its meaning. "Give her the living *"babe,* and in no wise slay it"? then bursts forth into his own conviction, "SHE is the mother."

The reign which was thus inaugurated is, after this, almost without events. For this reason, as well as from the confusion of the various texts which describe it, it must be viewed not chronologically, but under its different aspects, — of his Empire, his great buildings, and his writings.

I. The Empire of Solomon in its external relations. In actual extent, the boundaries of Israel did not reach beyond the conquests of David. But External relations of the Empire. it was reserved for Solomon to fill up what David had but established in part. "He shall have dominion from "sea to sea, and from the Euphrates to the ends of the "earth."¹ "The Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly. " . . . and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as "had not been on any king before him in Israel."² For the most part this wide dominion was established, in accordance with the promise of his name, by arts of peace. But there were two or three exceptions, apparently at the commencement of his reign.

It was, indeed, not surprising that the surrounding nations, especially Edom and Syria, when they heard of the accession of so young a sovereign, should have aspired to throw off the yoke which his warlike father had imposed upon them. Edom was the first. A young Edomite prince, Hadad, had escaped from the extermination of his countrymen by the sword of Joab, at the time of David's conquest, and had lain concealed in the court of Egypt till the news arrived of the death of the

¹ Ps. lxxii. 8.

is exactly in the style of the Assyrian

² 1 Chr. xxix. 25. The connection inscriptions.

two oppressors of his country. Against the will of his Egyptian protector he returned, and kept up more or less of a guerilla warfare amongst the Idumæan mountains, all the days of Solomon.¹ A second was Rezon, who had escaped from the rout of the Syrians in David's expedition against Zobah, and at the head of a band of freebooters established himself in Damascus.²

These, with possibly attempts at insurrection on the part of the old Canaanite population, must be the upheavings which gave occasion to the 2d Psalm. "Why do the heathen imagine a vain thing, and the rulers of the earth stand up together against JEHOVAH and against His anointed?" All these tumultuary movements were waiting their time to break out as soon as Solomon was removed; but "to him was given the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. He broke them with a rod of iron, and dashed them in pieces like a potter's vessel;" and over that vast dominion, with mingled joy and fear, he was served till the close of his magnificent career.

1. In the north and northeast, Hamath, which apparently had thrown off the yoke on David's death, was recovered.³ Fortresses⁴ were established along the heights of Lebanon, and stations along the desert towards the Euphrates. Of these establishments two remain, which, partly by tradition, partly by resemblance of name, are connected with Solomon. One is Baalbec; the great sanctuary, which commanded the valley of Cœlesyria, on the way to Hamath, and of which the enormous substructions⁵ appear to date from

¹ 1 Kings xi. 14–22.

² Ibid. 23–25.

³ 2 Chr. viii. 3.

⁴ Ibid. 3–5. "They that dwell in

the wilderness shall bow before him; his enemies shall lick the dust." Ps. lxxii. 9.

⁵ Beyond the inference suggested

an age far anterior to the Syro-Greek or Syro-Roman temples built upon them. Eastward his dominion extended to Thapsacus (Tiph-sach¹), and on the way to this is the other probable memorial of his greatness, "Tadmor in the wilderness;" if we may trust the native name which has clung to the famous city of Zenobia, in spite of its Roman appellation, by which it has been translated.² Its situation, in what must then have been a palm-grove, at the point where the wide barren valley, enclosed between two parallel ranges of hills, opens on the still wider desert, and where the abundant springs gather round it a circle of vegetation, would naturally have pointed it out to Solomon as a site for a city, or a halting-place for caravans half-way between Damascus and Babylon. The ruins which now attract the traveller's attention, are of a time long posterior to the Jewish monarchy. But even as late as the twelfth century, Benjamin of Tudela describes its walls as being built of stones equally gigantic with those which form the glory of Baalbec. They have disappeared; and of the ancient city, if so be, of Solomon, there are now no vestiges but mounds of rubbish and ruin, unless, as at Baalbec, some of the larger stones forming the substructions of the Temple of the Sun are of that date,³ and the columns of

by the gigantic size of these remains, there is no certain indication of their Solomonian origin. "Baalath," of 1 Kings x. 18, is in the south of Palestine. It may possibly be "Baal-Hamon" in Cant. viii. 11, where Solomon had vineyards.

¹ 1 Kings iv. 24.

² This is expressly asserted by Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 6, § 1, and implied in 2 Chron. viii. 4. But here a doubt creeps in. In 1 Kings ix. 18,

the building of Tadmor or Tamar is coupled with fortresses in the south of Palestine, and the words "in the land" are added, as if to show that "the wilderness" spoken of was that within Judea, and to this would correspond the situation of *Tamar* (Ezek. xlvii. 19), probably Hazazon-Tamar or Engedi (2 Chr. xx. 2).

³ Miss Beaufort's *Syrian Shrines*, i. 356.

Egyptian granite ascribed to Solomon at the entrance of the Temple.¹

2. But the most important influences brought to bear on the development of the kingdom were those of Egypt, Arabia, and Tyre.

Relations
with Egypt.

Now, for the first time since the Exodus, Israel was again brought into contact with the kingdom of the Pharaohs. The Egyptian sovereign at this time was probably reigning² at Tanis. His Queen's name (Tahpenes) is preserved to us.³ A correspondence with him, under the name of Vaphres, is preserved in heathen records.⁴

From the first moment of Solomon's accession, the Egyptian King was so favorably disposed towards the young Prince as to withdraw all countenance from the designs of Hadad, who had become his nephew by marriage. Not long afterwards, his daughter became Solomon's Queen.⁵ He had attacked and conquered the refractory Canaanite kingdom of Gezer, which had remained independent, on the southwestern frontier of Palestine, and resisted the arms of all the Israelite chiefs from Joshua down to David, and which thus became the dowry of the Egyptian Princess.⁶

Besides the indirect influences which this connection exercised, as we shall see, on the architecture, the manners, the literature, and the religion of Israel, it led at once to the reëstablishment of an intercourse, which would have been inconceivable to the Hebrews who, standing on the shores of the Red Sea, seemed to have parted with the Egyptians forever. Horses and chariots, before almost unknown in Palestine, were now brought

¹ Miss Beaufort's *Syrian Shrines*, i.

360.

² Ewald, iii. 279.

³ 1 Kings xi. 19.

⁴ Eusebius, *Præp. Ev.* ix. 31.

⁵ 1 Kings iii. 1.

⁶ *Ibid.* ix. 16.

in as regular articles of commerce from Egypt.¹ Stables were established on an enormous scale, — both for horses and dromedaries.² Four miles out of Jerusalem, under the King's own patronage, a celebrated caravanserai for travellers into Egypt — the first halting-place on their route — was founded by Chimham, son of Barzillai, on the property granted to him by David out of the paternal patrimony of Bethlehem. That caravanserai remained with Chimham's name for at least four centuries,³ and, according to the immovable usages of the East, it probably was the same which, at the time of the Christian era, furnished shelter for two travellers with their infant child, when "there was no room in the inn," and when they too from that spot fled into Egypt.

3. Doubtless through the same Egyptian influence was secured a still more important outlet of commerce on the southeast. Through the es-
Relations
with Arabia.
tablishment of a port at the head of the gulf of Elath, Palestine at last gained an access to the Indian Ocean. Ezion-geber, "the Giant's Backbone," so called probably from the huge range of mountains on each side of it, became an emporium teeming with life and activity; the same, on the eastern branch, that Suez has in our own time become on the western branch of the Red Sea. Beneath that line of palm-trees which now shelters the wretched village of Akaba, was then heard the stir of ship-builders and sailors.⁴ Thence went forth the fleet of Solomon, manned by Tyrian sailors,⁵ on its mysterious voyage — to Ophir, in the far East, on the shores of India or Arabia. From Arabia also, near or distant,

¹ 1 Kings x. 28.

³ Jer. xli. 17.

² Ibid. iv. 26, 27. For 40,000 in ver. 26, Ewald (iii. 332) reads 4000 or 4200, from 2 Chr. ix. 25; three horses for each of the chariots.

⁴ 1 Kings ix. 26.

⁵ Ibid.; 2 Chr. viii. 18; Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 6, § 4.

came a constant traffic of spices, both from private individuals and from the chiefs.¹ So great was Solomon's interest in these expeditions, that he actually travelled himself to the gulf of Akaba to see the port.²

4. The mention of the Tyrian sailors introduces us to another great power, now allied with Israel. Relations with Tyre. Hiram, king of Tyre, had already been the friend of David. But he was a still faster friend of Solomon. There is something pathetic in the relationship between the old Phœnician and the young Israelite, a faint secular likeness of the romantic friendship of David and Jonathan. Hiram, too, has shared in Solomon's glory. Alone of all the Tyrian kings, his name is attached by popular tradition to a still existing monument. A gray weather-beaten sarcophagus of unknown antiquity,³ raised aloft on three huge rocky pillars of stone, looks down from the hills above Tyre over the city and harbor, and still is called "the Tomb of Hiram." The traditions of this alliance lingered in both kingdoms. Tyrian historians⁴ long recollected the interchange of riddles between the two sovereigns. The Tyrian archives, even as late as the Christian era, were supposed to contain copies of the many letters which had passed. Two of these⁵ are preserved, written on the occasion of an embassy from Hiram, sent to anoint, or take part in the anointing, of Solomon.⁶ Hiram supplied Tyrian architects and timber from Mount Lebanon for Solomon's temple. Solomon visited Hiram at Tyre, and was even supposed to have worshipped in a Sidonian temple.⁷ He gave to

¹ 1 Kings x. 15, 25.

² 2 Chr. viii. 17.

³ Eusebius, *Præp. Ev.* ix. 31.

⁴ Dios and Menander, quoted by Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 5, § 3; *c. Apion.* i. 17, 18. See Lecture XXVIII.

⁵ 1 Kings v. 2-9. They are given in slightly different forms in Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 2, §§ 6, 7.

⁶ *Ibid.* v. 1 (LXX.).

⁷ Justin, *Dial. c. Tryph.* c. 34.

Hiram the district of Galilee, on the borders of Tyre, which in the name of "Cabul" (or "Gabul") preserved a recollection of the humorous complaint of King Hiram to his royal brother for having given him the "offscourings" of his dominions.¹ In its later name of "the boundaries of Tyre and Sidon,"² long after the extinction of the Phœnician power, it retained a reminiscence of the ancient friendship.

But the main result of the alliance was in the extension of the commerce of both countries. Tyrian sailors were supplied to the fleet of Solomon, starting, as we have seen, in the Red Sea. But there was a direct union in the Mediterranean also. Not only was there a navy of Ophir, that is, of the extreme east, but there was also, in express conjunction with the navy of Hiram, a navy of Tarshish, that is, of the extreme west.³

Without entering into the tangled question of the details of the two Hebrew texts which record the destination of the fleets,⁴ we may dwell on the return of the voyagers, as they are described, with their marvellous articles of commerce, from west and east, — *gold* and *silver*, *almug*, *ivory*, *aloes*, *cassia*, *cinnamon*, *apes*, and *peacocks*.

¹ 1 Kings ix. 12, 13.

² Matt. xv. 21.

³ This argument is based rather on the distinct and separate mention of the fleets of Ophir and of Tarshish, than on the mere use of the word "ships of Tarshish" (1 Kings x. 22), or the expression "to Tarshish," in 2 Chr. ix. 21, xx. 36, of which latter passage the force is destroyed by its occurrence in a context which requires Ophir as the destination.

⁴ The arguments for a Western expedition may be seen in Keil; for an Eastern, in Thenius. The two theories may be united by supposing a circumnavigation of Africa, in behalf of which is the three years, 1 Kings x. 22, and in Herod. iv. 42, and the intimation in Pharaoh Necho's Voyage (*ibid.*), that it was not the first time. The expedition may sometimes have gone from Ezion-geber, sometimes from Tyre.

The “abundance of silver” probably came from the silver mines of Spain. The apes may possibly have come from that one spot where they exist in Europe, our own rock of Gibraltar. Africa was the great gold country of the ancient world, and may also have furnished the elephants’ tusks.

But some of the articles themselves and the names of more point directly to India. Ophir,¹ the seat of the gold, may be directly identified with the gold mines of Sumatra and Malacca. The *almug* or *algum* is the Hebrew form of a Deccan word for sandal-wood, and sandal-wood grows only on the coast of Malabar, south of Goa. The word for ape — “*capi*” or “*koph*,” whence the Greek *kebos* — is the usual Sanscrit word for a monkey. *Thukiyim*, the name for peacocks,² is a Sanscrit word with a Malabar accent, and the peacock is indigenous in India, and probably had not yet had time to extend into the west, as it afterwards did from the sanctuary of Juno at Samos. The word used for the tusks³ of elephants is nearly the same in Sanscrit; and the fragrant woods and spices, called *aloes*,⁴ *cassia*,⁵ and *cinnamon*,⁶ are all, either by name or by nature, connected with India and Ceylon.

¹ The argument in favor of the Indian position of Ophir, as well as the Indian origin of these words, is stated by Ritter, *Sinai*, pp. 148–431; Max Müller, in *Science of Languages*, p. 214. The argument in favor of its African, and still more of its Arabic, position, is stated by Mr. Twisleton in the *Dictionary of the Bible*, OPHIR.

² Peacocks are kept in the gardens of the Shah of Persia (Morier).

³ *Ibba* and *Shen Habbim*.

⁴ By a likeness of sound translated

from “*Ahalim*” (Ps. xlv. 8; Prov. vii. 17; Cant. iv. 14), a fragrant tree of Malacca — *agila*, hence *agelloducum*, *aquileca* — eagle wood. The only non-Solomonian passage where the word occurs is Num. xxiv. 6, in speaking of the gardens of the Euphrates.

⁵ Ps. xlv. 8, *Katzioth*, Indian *koost*.

⁶ Probably *cacyn-nama* from Ceylon — Prov. vii. 17; Cant. iv. 14; also in Arabia, Ex. xxx. 13 (comp. Herod. iii. 111); and Tyre, Ezek. xxvii. 19. See also Exod. xxx. 23.

Let us for a moment contemplate the extraordinary interest of these voyages for their own and for all future times.

An admirable passage in Mr. Froude's history¹ of Elizabeth describes the revolution effected in England when the maritime tendency of the nation for the first time broke through the rigid forms in which it had hitherto been confined. Much more marvellous must have been the revolution effected by this sudden disruption of the barriers by which the sea now became familiar to the secluded inland Israelites. Shut out from the Mediterranean by the insufficiency of the ports of Palestine, and from the Indian Ocean by the Arabian desert, only by these extensive alliances and enterprises could they become accustomed to it. We know not when the Psalms were written which contain the allusions to the wonders of the sea, and which by these have become endeared to a maritime empire like our own ; but, if not composed in the reign of Solomon, at least they are derived from the stimulus which he gave to nautical discovery. The 104th Psalm seems almost as if it had been written by one of the superintendents of the deportations of timber from the heights of Lebanon. The mountains, the springs, the cedars, the sea in the distance, with its ships and monster brood, are combined in that landscape as nowhere else.² The 107th describes, with the feeling of one who had been at sea himself, the sensations of those who went down from the hills of Judah to the ships of Jaffa, and to their business in the great waters of the Mediterranean ; the sudden storm, the rising to the crest of the waves as if to meet the heavens, and then sinking down as if

¹ *History of England*, viii. p. 426. pendix, p. 217, and *Sinai and Pales-*

² See *Sermons in the East*, Ap- tine, chapter xi.

into the depths of the grave; the staggering to and fro on deck, the giddiness and loss of thought and sense; and to this, in the Book of Proverbs, is added a notice rare in any ancient writings, unique in the Hebrew Scriptures, of the well-known signs of seasickness; where the drunkard is warned that if he tarries long at the wine, he shall be reduced to the wretched state of "him that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth down before the rudder."¹

Not only were these routes of commerce continued through the Tyrian merchants into Central Asia, and by the Red Sea, till the foundation of Alexandria, but the record of them awakened in Columbus the keen desire to reopen by another way the wonders which Solomon had first revealed. When *Sopora* in Hayti became known, it was believed to be the long-lost *Ophir*. When the mines of *Peru* were explored, they were believed to contain the gold of *Parvaim*. The very name of the West Indies given by Columbus to the islands where first he landed, is a memorial of his fixed belief that he had reached the coast of those Indies in the Eastern world which had been long ago discovered by Solomon.

Imagine too the arrival of those strange plants and animals enlivening the monotony of Israelitish life; the brilliant metals, the fragrant woods, the gorgeous peacock, the chattering ape — to that inland people, rare as the first products of America to the inhabitants of Europe. Observe the glimpse given to us, into those remote regions, here seen for an instant. Now for the first time Europe was open to the view of the chosen people, — Spain, the Peru of the old world, Spain, Tar-

¹ Prov. xxiii. 30, 34.

tessus, Cadiz (the "*Kadesh*," the western sanctuary of the Phœnician people), the old historic Straits, — the vast Atlantic beyond, — possibly our own islands, our own Cornish coasts, which had already sent the produce of their mines into the heart of Asia, — were seen by the eyes of Israelites. And on the other side the inventory of the articles brought in Solomon's fleets, gives us the first distinct knowledge of that venerable Sanscrit¹ tongue, the sacred language of primeval India, the parent language of European civilization. In the thousandth year before the Christian era, we see that it not only was in existence, but already had begun to decay. The forms of speech which the sailors of Hiram heard on the coast of Malabar are no longer the pure Sanscrit of earlier days. In these rude terms, the more interesting on this account, thus embedded in the records of the Hebrew nation, we grasp the first links of the union between the Aryan and the Semitic races.

And finally, not only in this philological and prospective sense, but in the true historical and religious sense, was this union of the East and the West, of remote Asia and of remote Europe, in the highest degree significant for the development of Israel. United then in Palestine, as they were united nowhere else in the ancient world, there was thus realized the first possibility of their final amalgamation in Christendom. The horizon first framed in the time of Solomon, after being again and again contracted, has now even in outward form reached even beyond its old limits of Ophir and Tarshish, and much more in the combination of inward moral qualities which mark the Christian Religion. Christianity alone, of all Religions, is on the one hand Oriental by its birth, and yet capable of becoming

¹ Max Müller, *Lectures on Science of Languages*, i. 144.

Western by its spirit and its energy. "The kings of "Tarshish and the isles shall bring presents (from the "West); the kings of Sheba and Saba shall offer gifts " (from the East). For *all* kings shall fall down before "him; *all* nations shall serve him."¹ So it was said already in the days of Solomon; and in a still wider sense, and with a still more direct application to the gathering together of these diverse elements in the Messiah's reign, was the strain taken up by the later Prophet, — in language which, though entirely his own, could never have been suggested to him, except through the imagery of the Empire of Solomon. After announcing how the treasures of the world were to come to Jerusalem, — "The abundance of the sea shall be "converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall "come unto thee," — he turns, on the one hand to the East: — "The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the "dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from "Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense. ". . . All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to "thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee; "they shall come up with acceptance upon mine altar;" and on the other hand, to the far West: — "Who are "these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their "windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the "ships of Tarshish first, to bring their sons from far, "their silver and gold with them. . . . And the sons "of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings "shall minister unto thee. . . . Therefore thy gates "shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day "nor night."² This is the latitude of the Old Dispensation, containing in germ the still wider latitude of the New.

¹ See Ps. lxxii. iv. 11.

² Isaiah lx. 5-11.

II. From the external Empire of Solomon we pass to the internal state of his dominions. It has ^{Internal} been already observed that the Hebrew people, ^{peace.} unlike other ancient nations, did not place their golden age in the remote past, but rather in the remote future. But, so far as there was any historical period in which it seemed to be realized, it was under the administration of Solomon. The general tone of the records of his reign is that of jubilant delight, as though it were indeed a golden day following on the iron and brazen age of the warlike David and his half-civilized predecessors. The heart of the poets of the age overflows with "the beautiful words"¹ of loyal delight. The royal justice and benevolence are like the welcome showers in the thirsty East. The poor, for once, are cared for. The very tops of the bare mountains seem to wave with corn, as on the fertile slopes of Lebanon.²

And with this poetic description of the peace and plenty with which the rugged hills of Palestine were to smile, agrees the hardly less poetic description of the prose narrative. "Judah and Israel," both divisions of the people, now for the last time united in one, "were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude; eating and drinking, and making merry. . . . Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his own vine" (that is, the vine that clustered round his court) "and under his own fig-tree" (that is, the fig which grew in his garden), "from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon."³ The wealth which he inherited from David, and which he acquired from his own revenue, whether from commerce or from the royal

¹ Ps. xlv. 1 (Heb.); I assume this as the most probable date of the Psalm. (See Perowne.)

² Ps. lxxii. 2, 5, 6, 7, 13, 16.

³ 1 Kings iv. 20-25.

domains, and from taxes¹ and tributes, is described as enormous. So plentiful was gold that "silver was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon."² And of a like strain is the joyous little hymn, ascribed to Solomon, which describes the increase, the vigor, the glory of the rising and ever-multiplying population,—the peaceful ease of all around, where "it is but lost labor to "rise up early, and sit down late, and eat the bread of "carefulness;" where blessings seem to descend even on the unconscious sleeper,—where the children are shot to and fro as the most powerful of all weapons from the bows of irresistible archers.³ The very names of the two successors under whom this flourishing state was disordered, seem to bear witness to the abundance and brightness of the days when they were born and bred—Rehoboam, "the widening of the people"—Jero-boam, "the multiplier of the people."

For this altered state of things a new organization was needed. Although the offices of the court were generally the same as those in David's time, the few changes that occur are significant of the advance in splendor and order.

The great officers are now for the first time called by one general name—"Princes,"⁴—a title which before had been almost confined to Joab. The union of priestly and secular functions still continued. Zabud, "the King's friend," is called a priest⁵ no less than Azariah, the son of Zadok. But on the other hand

Court of Solomon. ¹ 1 Kings x. 14, 666 talents of gold. Possibly (as Professor Plumptre makes it) the first suggestion of the mystical number of Rev. xiii. 18. The treasures left by David for building the Temple, in 1 Chr. xxix. 1-7, amount,

it is computed, to eight millions sterling.

² 1 Kings x. 21.

³ Ps. cxxvii. 2, 4.

⁴ *Sharim*, 1 Kings iv. 2.

⁵ *Ibid.* 5 (*Cohen*, A. V. "principal officer").

the name is not extended, as in David's court, to the royal family; thus perhaps indicating that the division of the two functions was gradually becoming perceptible. Instead of the one scribe or secretary, there were now two, Elihoreph or Eliaph, and Ahijah, sons of the old scribe Shisha.¹ The two "counsellors," who occupied so important a place by David, now disappear. Probably the counsellors were so increased in number as to form a separate body in the state, as in the next reign there was a band of aged advisers, known as "those who had stood before Solomon."² The Prophets cease to figure amongst the dignitaries; as though the prophetic office had been overborne by the royal dignity. The Chief Priesthood, as we have seen, was concentrated in Zadok alone, and from him descended a peculiar hierarchy, known by the name of sons of Zadok,³ the possible origin (whether from their first ancestor's opinions, or from a traditionary adherence to the old Law) of the later sect of the Sadducees.

The three military bodies seem to have remained unchanged. The commander of the "host" is the priestly warrior Benaiah, who succeeded the murdered Joab. The six hundred heroes of David's early life only once pass across the scene. Sixty of them, their swords as of old girt on their thighs, attended Solomon's litter, to guard him from banditti on his way to Lebanon.⁴ The guard appear only as household troops, employed on state pageants, and apparently commanded by the officer⁵ now mentioned for the

¹ 1 Kings iv. 3.

² Ibid. xii. 6. Jerome mentions (*Quæst. Hebr.* on 2 Chr. x. 6) as amongst them, *Benaiah* and *Jehiel*, the tutors of the Princes.

³ 2 Chr. xxxi. 10; Ez. xl. 46;

xlii. 19, &c. See Mr. Twisleton on SADDUCEES, in *Dict. of the Bible*, p. 1085.

⁴ Cant. iii. 7, 8.

⁵ 1 Kings xiv. 27.

first time, at least in the full magnitude of his post. He was "over the household," in fact the Vizier, and keeper of the royal treasury¹ and armory.² In subsequent reigns he is described as wearing an official robe, girt about with an official girdle, and carrying on his shoulder as a badge, like a sword of state, the gigantic key of the house of David.³ The office was held by Ahishar.⁴ In the Arabian legends it is given to the great musician, Asaph.⁵

The only two functionaries who retained their places from David's time were Jehoshaphat, the historiographer or recorder, and Adoram or Adoniram, the tax-collector.⁶ These were probably appointed when very young, at the time when David's reign was gradually settling into the peaceful arrangements of later times.

The word⁷ which elsewhere is used for the garrisons planted in a hostile country, is now employed for "officers" appointed by the King of Israel over his own subjects. They were divided into two bodies, both alike, as it would seem, directed by a new dignitary, who also appears for the first time,—Azariah, son of the Prophet Nathan, "who was over the officers."⁸

The lesser body consisted of twelve chiefs, in number corresponding to the twelve princes of the twelve tribes, who had administered the kingdom under David, and to the twelve surveyors of his pastures and herds.⁹

¹ Isa. xxii. 15.

² 1 Kings xiv. 27.

³ Isa. xxii. 21, 22.

⁴ 1 Kings iv. 6 (LXX. adds Eliak).

⁵ D'Herbelot, art. *Assaf*.

⁶ 1 Kings iv. 3, 6; xii. 18.

⁷ *Netsib*, and *Nitssab* (used in 1 Sam. x. 5, xiii. 3, 4, 1 Chr. xi. 16, for Philistine garrisons in Judea; and

in 2 Sam. viii. 6, 14, 1 Kings xxii. 47, 1 Chr. xviii. 13, 2 Chr. xvii. 2, for Israelite garrisons), are used in 1 Kings iv. 5, 7, 19, 27, ix. 23, 2 Chr. viii. 10, for the officers of Solomon. The Hebrew term answers in some degree to the English word "post."

⁸ 1 Kings iv. 5.

⁹ Ibid. 7; 1 Chr. xxvii. 16–31.

It is to the latter division that the twelve "officers" of Solomon corresponded, as they were arranged not according to the tribal divisions, and as their sole function was to furnish provisions for the royal household. Two of them were sons-in-law of the King.¹

The larger body of "officers" were chosen from the Israelites, to control the taskwork exacted from the Canaanite population.² The foreign populations within his dominions were, after the first ineffectual attempt at insurrection, completely cowed. The Hittite chiefs were allowed to keep up a kind of royal state, with horses and chariots;³ but the population generally was employed, like the aboriginal inhabitants of Greece, on public works, and was heavily taxed.⁴ Several important fortresses were created to keep them in check; one in the extreme north, in the old Canaanite capital of Hazor; a second in the Canaanite town of Megiddo, commanding the plain of Esdraelon; a third on the ruins of the Philistine city of Gaza, which had maintained its independence longest of all; two in the villages of Bethhoron at the upper and lower ends of the pass of that name, and one at Baalath or Kirjath-jearim. The three last-named forts commanded the approaches from Sharon and Philistia to Jerusalem.⁵

From the Canaanite bondmen were probably descended the degraded class, standing last in the list of those who returned from Babylon,—"the children of Solomon's slaves."⁶ They were apparently employed in the quarries, as those who appear next above them the Nethinim, were in the forests.

¹ 1 Kings iv. 11, 15.

² Ibid. ix. 23; 2 Chr. viii. 10.

³ 1 Kings x. 29.

⁴ Ibid. ix. 20, 21.

⁵ 1 Kings ix. 15-18; 2 Chr. viii 4-6.

⁶ Ezra. ii. 55; Neh. vii. 57. See Professor Plumptre, in the *Dictionary of the Bible*.

The public works of Solomon were such as of themselves to leave an impress on his age. Of his doubtful connection with Tadmor and Baalbec we have already spoken. But there is no question of those more immediately connected with his court and his residence.

Jerusalem itself received a new life from his accession.

It has even been conjectured that the name
Jerusalem. first became fixed through his influence; being, in its latter part, an echo, as it were, of his own — “peace.” When the Greeks gave their form to the name, they were guided by a remembrance of his name. “Hierosolyma,” in their estimate, was the “Hieron” or Temple of Solomon.¹ In any case Jerusalem now assumed the dimensions and the splendor of a capital. It became the centre of the commercial routes before mentioned, and Jewish tradition described² the roads leading into Jerusalem, marked, as they ran over the white limestone of the country, by the black basaltic stones of their pavement. The city was enclosed with a new wall,³ which, as the reign advanced, the King increased in height and fortified with vast towers. The castle or city of David was fortified by an ancient, perhaps Jebusite, rampart, known by the name of “Millo,” or the “house of Millo,” of which, possibly, remains still exist on the west of the Temple wall.⁴ The master of these works was Jeroboam,⁵ then quite a youth.

Amongst these buildings, the PALACE of Solomon was prominent. It was commenced at the same
The palace. time as the Temple, but not finished till eight years afterwards. The occasion of its erection was the

¹ Eupolemus, in Eusebius, *Præp. Ev.* ix. 34.

² Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 7, § 4.

³ 1 Kings iii. 1; ix. 15; Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 2, § 1; 6, § 1.

⁴ 1 Kings ix. 15, 24; xi. 27.

⁵ *Ibid.* xi. 26.

marriage of Solomon with the Egyptian princess. She resided at first in the castle of David; but the King had still a scruple about the reception of a heathen, even though it were his own Queen, in precincts which had once been hallowed by the temporary sojourn of the Ark.¹

The new Palace must have been apart from the castle of David, and considerably below the level of the Temple-mount. It was built on massive substructions of enormous stones, carefully hewn,² and was enclosed within a large court. It included several edifices within itself. The chief was a long hall, which, like the Temple, was encased in cedar; whence probably its name, "the House of the Forest of Lebanon."³ In front of it ran a pillared portico. Between this portico and the palace itself was a cedar porch, — sometimes called the Tower of David. In this tower, apparently hung over the walls outside, were a thousand golden shields, which gave the whole palace the name of the Armory.⁴ With a splendor that outshone any like fortress, the tower with these golden targets glittered far off in the sunshine like the tall neck, as it was thought, of a beautiful bride, decked out after the manner of the East, with strings of golden coins. Five hundred of them were made by Solomon's orders for the royal guard,⁵

¹ 1 Kings iii. 1; 2 Chr. viii. 11.

² Ibid. vii. 9.

³ Ibid. vii. 2. In like manner, the temple was called "Lebanon" (Re-land, *Palest.* 313). According to Josephus (viii. 5, § 2), it was sculptured with leafy trees.

⁴ Cant. iv. 4; Isa. xxii. 8; Ps. lxxvi. 4. At Tyre, the beauty of the place was thought to consist in the splendor and variety of the shields

all nations hung on its walls (Ezek. xxvii. 10, 11). In Rome, the temple of Bellona was studded with them. In Athens, the round marks where they hung can still be traced on the walls of the Parthenon. There were also arms hung round the walls of the second Temple (Josephus, *Ant.* xv. 11, § 3).

⁵ 1 Kings x. 16, 17.

but the most interesting were the older five hundred, which David had carried off in his Syrian wars from the guard of Hadadezer,¹ as trophies of arms and ornaments, in which the Syrians specially excelled.² It was these which, being regarded as spoils won in a sacred cause, gave, in all probability, occasion to the expression: "The *shields* of the earth belong unto God."³

This porch was the gem and centre of the whole Empire; and was so much thought of that a smaller likeness to it was erected in another part of the royal precinct for the Queen.⁴ Within the porch itself was to be seen the King in state.⁵ On a throne of ivory, brought from Africa or India, the throne of many an Arabian legend, the Kings of Judah were solemnly seated on the day of their accession. From its lofty seat, and under that high gateway, Solomon and his successors after him delivered their solemn judgments. That "porch" or "gate of justice" still kept alive the likeness of the old patriarchal custom of sitting in judgment at the gate; exactly as the Gate of Justice still recalls it to us at Granada, and the Sublime Porte—"the Lofty Gate" at Constantinople. He sat on the back of a golden bull, its head turned over its shoulder, probably the ox or bull of Ephraim; under his feet, on each side of the steps, were six golden lions, probably the lions of Judah.⁶ This was "the seat of judgment." This was "the throne of the House of David."⁷

His banquets were of the most superb kind. All his plate and drinking-vessels were of gold; "none were of silver; it was nothing accounted of

¹ 2 Sam. viii. 7 (LXX.). See Lecture XXIII.

² Isa. xxii. 6.

³ Ps. xlvii. 9.

⁴ 1 Kings vii. 8.

⁵ 1 Kings vii. 7.

⁶ Ibid. x. 18-20; 2 Chr. ix. 17-19; Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 5, § 2.

⁷ Ps. cxxii. 5.

“in the days of Solomon.”¹ His household daily consumed thirty oxen, a hundred sheep, besides game of all kinds — “harts, roebucks, fallow-deer, and fatted fowl,” probably for his own special table, from the Assyrian desert.² There was a constant succession of guests.³ One class of them are expressly mentioned, — Chimham and his brothers.⁴ The train of his servants was such as had never been seen before. There were some who sat in his presence, others who always stood, others who were his cup-bearers,⁵ others musicians.⁶

His stables were on the most splendid scale. Up to this time, except in the extravagant ambition of Absalom and Adonijah, chariots and horses The stables. had been all but unknown in Palestine. In the earlier times, the ass had been the only animal used, even for princes. In David’s time, the King and the Princes of the royal family rode on mules. But Solomon’s intercourse with Egypt at once introduced horses into the domestic establishment, cavalry into the army. For the first time, the streets of Jerusalem heard the constant rattle of chariot wheels. Four thousand⁷ stalls were attached to the royal palace, — three horses for each chariot, and dromedaries for the attendants. The quantity of oats and of straw was so great that special officers were appointed to collect it.⁸ There was one chariot of extraordinary beauty,⁹ called the chariot of Pharaoh, in which the horses with their trappings were so graceful as to be compared to a bride, in her most magnificent ornaments.

¹ 1 Kings x. 21.

² Ibid. iv. 22–24; x. 5.

³ Ibid. iv. 27. The golden table itself was believed to have been preserved in Spain by the Goths (Weil, *Bibl. Legends*).

⁴ 1 Kings ii. 7.

⁵ 1 Kings x. 5.

⁶ Eccles. ii. 8.

⁷ 40,000 in 1 Kings iv. 26; 4000 or 4200 in 2 Chr. ix. 25.

⁸ 1 Kings iv. 28.

⁹ Cant. i. 9.

In the true style of an Asiatic sovereign, he established what his successors on the northern throne of Israel afterwards kept up at Samaria and Jezreel, but what he alone attempted in the wild hills of Judea — gardens and “parks (paradises), and “trees of all kinds of fruit, and reservoirs of water to “water the trees.”¹ One of these was probably in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, the spot afterwards² known as “the king’s garden,” at the junction of the valleys of Hinnom and the Kedron. Another was south of Bethlehem, probably that called by Josephus³ “Etham,” a spot still marked by three gigantic reservoirs, which bear the name of the Pools of Solomon. A long covered aqueduct, built by him, and restored by Pilate, still runs along the hill-side, and conveys water to the thirsty capital. The adjoining valley (the Wady Urtâs) winds like a river, marked by its unusual verdure, amongst the rocky knolls of Judea. The huge square mountain which rises near it is probably the old Beth-hac-cerem (“House of the Vine”), so called from the vineyards which Solomon planted, as its modern Arabic name Fureidis, “the little Paradise,” must be derived from the “Paradise” (the very word used in the Book of Ecclesiastes and the Canticles) of the neighboring park. Thither, at early dawn, according to the Jewish tradition, he would drive out from Jerusalem in one of his numerous chariots, drawn by horses of unparalleled swiftness and beauty, himself clothed in white, followed by a train of mounted archers, all splendid youths, of magnificent stature, dressed in purple, their long black hair flowing behind them, powdered with gold dust, which glittered in the sun, as they galloped along after their master.⁴

¹ Eccles. ii. 5.

² 2 Kings xxv. 4 ; Neh. iii. 15.

³ Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 7, § 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*

A third resort was far away in the north. On the heights of Hermon, beyond the limits of Palestine, looking over the plain of Damascus, in the vale of Baalbec, in the vineyards of Baal-hamon, were cool retreats from the summer heat. Thither, with pavilions of which the splendor contrasted with the black tents of the neighboring Arabs, Solomon retired.¹

From Solomon's possessions on the northern heights, "from Lebanon, the smell of Lebanon, the streams of Lebanon, the tower of Lebanon looking towards Damascus;"² "from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the leopards' dens," on those wild rocks; from the fragrance of "those mountains of myrrh, those hills of frankincense;" "the roes and young harts on the mountains of spices,"³ the spectator looks out over the desert plain; a magnificent cavalcade approaches amidst the clouds of incense, — then, as now, burnt to greet the approach of a mighty prince.⁴ "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant? Behold his litter: it is Solomon's. . . . King Solomon hath made himself a palanquin of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple; the centre of it is wrought with beautiful work by the daughters of Jerusalem. Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon."⁵

In the midst of this gorgeous array was the Sov-

¹ Cant. iv. 8; viii. 11; i. 5.

² Ibid. iv. 8, 11, 15; vii. 4.

³ Ibid. iv. 6, 8; viii. 14.

⁴ See Ginsburg on Cant. iii. 6.

A like incident occurred on the entrance of the Prince of Wales into Beyrût.

⁵ Cant. iii. 6-11.

ereign himself. The King is fair, with superhuman beauty — his sword is on his thigh¹ — he
 The King rides in his chariot, or on his warhorse; his archers are behind him, his guards are round him; his throne is like the throne of God; his sceptre is in his hand. He wears the crown, which, as still in Eastern marriages, his mother placed upon his head in the day of his espousals; he is radiant as if with the oil and essence of gladness; his robes are so scented with the perfumes of India or Arabia that they seem to be nothing but a mass of myrrh,² aloes, and cassia; out of his palaces³ comes a burst of joyous music, of men-singers and women-singers,⁴ the delights of the sons of men, musical instruments of all sorts.

The Queen, probably from Egypt, the chief of all
 and Queen. his vast establishment of wives and concubines, themselves the daughters of kings, was by his side, glittering in the gold of Ophir; one blaze of glory,⁵ as she sat by him in the interior of the palace; the gifts of the princely state of Tyre are waiting to welcome her; her attendants gorgeously arrayed are behind her; she has left her father and her father's house; her reward is to be in the greatness of her descendants.

Such is the splendor of Solomon's court, which, even down to the outward texture of their royal robes, lived in the traditions of Israel. When Christ bade His disciples look on the bright scarlet and gold of the spring flowers of Palestine, which "toil not, neither do they spin," He carried back their thoughts to the great King, "Solomon," who, "in all his glory was not

¹ Ps. xlv. 3. Like those of his attendants, Cant. iii. 8.

² Ps. xlv. 8 (Perowne).

³ Ps. xlv. 9 (Perowne).

⁴ Eccles. ii. 8.

⁵ Ps. xlv. 13 (Perowne).

“arrayed like one of these.”¹ He had no mightier comparison to use; He Himself—we may be allowed to say so, for we feel it as we read His words—was moved by the recollection to the same thrill of emotion which the glory of Solomon still awakens in us.

¹ Matt. vi. 29.

NOTE TO LECTURE XXVII.

In the following LECTURE on the TEMPLE, the authorities are:—

1 Kings vi.—viii.; 2 Chr. iii.—vii.; Ezek. xl.—xlvi.; Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 3 and 4; and (though chiefly relating to the second Temple) the Tract *Mid-doth* in the Mishna.

The modern works on the subject are too numerous to cite. But I wish to express my obligations for the oral assistance given me by Professor Willis of Cambridge, in the general idea of the Temple; and also by a former pupil, the Rev. W. H. Lowder, particularly in regard to the illustrations to be derived from the descriptions in Ezekiel.

LECTURE XXVII.

THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON.

OF all the monuments of the internal administration of Solomon, none is to be compared in itself, or in its effect on the future character of the ^{The Temple.} people, with the building of the Temple. It was far more than a mere architectural display. It supplied the framework of the history of the kingdom of Judah. As in the Grecian tragedies we always see in the background the gate of Mycenæ, so in the story which we are now to traverse, we must always have in view the Temple of Solomon. There is hardly any reign which is not in some way connected with its construction or its changes. In front of the great church of the Escorial in Spain, — in the eyes of Spaniards itself a likeness of the Temple, — overlooking the court called from them the Court of the Kings, are six colossal statues of the kings of Judah, who bore the chief part in the Temple of Jerusalem: — David, the Proposer; Solomon, the Founder; Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, Manasseh, the successive Purifiers and Restorers. The idea there so impressively graven in stone runs through the subsequent history, and requires a brief description of the first appearance of this new scene of sacred occurrences.

Like all great works, it was the result of a long succession of events. Ever since the return of the Ark from the captivity in Philistia, the idea of a permanent building for its reception had been growing familiar.

The mere fact of its separation from its ancient habitation in the Sacred Tent, had necessitated its accommodation within the walls of a "*house*." The "*house*" of Abinadab first, and of Obed-edom afterwards, became, as it were, little temples for its reception. When Jebus was conquered by David, his first thought was to find out "a place for the Lord; a habitation for the Mighty One of Jacob."¹ The new capital was the fitting place for the new sanctuary. The ark was accordingly brought to Mount Zion. But here the design was suspended. David belonged to the earlier warlike and nomadic epoch. The fulfilment of his design was reserved for his peaceful son.

Still, two definite steps were taken towards it. First, in consequence of the vision which connected the hill with the name of "*Moriah*," the threshing-floor of Araunah was selected, rather than the sanctuary on Zion or Olivet, for the sacred site; and the whole hill was subsequently added. Secondly, the materials were begun to be laid in, and communications were opened with Hiram. The Chronicler even ascribes to David the whole plan of the building² down to the minutest details.

It was the first work that Solomon undertook. The stones were brought partly from Lebanon,
 Its building. partly from the neighborhood of Bethlehem,³ partly from the quarries which have been recently discovered under the Temple rock, and known by the name of the "*Royal Caverns*."⁴ Hiram's assistance was doubly valuable, both from the architectural skill

¹ Ps. cxxxii. 5.

² 1 Chr. xxviii. 11, 12, 19. Of this there is no indication in the Books of Kings. On the contrary, the design and preparation is ascribed exclusively to Solomon, on the very occasions

where they are by the Chronicles ascribed to David. Comp. 1 Kings v. 6; 2 Chr. ii. 3, 7; 1 Kings vi. 2; 2 Chr. iii. 3.

³ Mishna, *Middoth*, iii. 4.

⁴ Josephus, *B. J.* v. 4, § 2.

of his countrymen,¹ already employed in his own great buildings, and from his supply of the cedar of Lebanon, conveyed on rafts to Joppa. An immense array, chiefly of Canaanites, was raised to work in the forests, and in the quarries of Lebanon.² In order to reconcile the spirit of the new architecture as nearly as was possible with the letter of the old law,³ the stones were hewn in the quarries, and placed with reverent silence one upon another without sound of axe or hammer, as if, by the gradual growth of nature, —

Like some tall palm, the noiseless fabric sprang.

As the building was itself an innovation on the strict Mosaic ritual, so much more was the ornamental treatment of brass and wood. Accordingly Hiram, the first sculptor and engraver of Israel was half a foreigner.⁴ His father was a Tyrian, and was dead; but his mother was a Danite who lived in Naphtali. He thus sprang, on the Israelite side, from the same tribe, and (according to Jewish tradition⁵) from the same family, as Aholiab, the Danite artist in the wilderness. So wide was his fame, and so profound the reverence entertained for him by the two sovereigns to whom he belonged, that he is called “the father” both of Solomon and of Hiram.⁶ Under his directions, the vessels of brass were cast in the clay-pits of the Jordan⁷ valley; and they were so

¹ Amongst whom the Giblites were famous, 1 Kings v. 18 (Heb.); Ezek. xxvii. 9.

² 1 Kings v. 13–17. To the cedars, from Lebanon, the Chronicler adds “algum” (2 Chr. ii. 8), which only grows in Malabar. See Lecture XXVI.

³ Deut. xxvii. 5, 6; 1 Kings vi. 7.

⁴ 1 Kings vii. 13, 14. Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 3, § 4.

⁵ Jerome (*Qu. Heb.* on 2 Chr. ii. 13).

⁶ 2 Chr. ii. 13; iv. 16.

⁷ 1 Kings vii. 45, 46. Hiram made all the brass ornaments, *i. e.* the two pillars, the lavers, — great and small, — the pots, shovels, and flesh-hooks.

numerous, that Solomon, with a true Oriental and imperial magnificence, left them unweighed, — “their weight was never found out.”¹

The uneven rock of Moriah had to be levelled, and the inequalities filled by immense substructions of “great stones,” “costly stones,” “hewed stones.” It is of these, if of any part of the Temple, that the remains are still to be seen.²

The general arrangements were taken from those of the Tabernacle.³ The dimensions, the divisions, are the same either actually or in proportion;⁴ and, thus far, are indicative of the firm hold which the institutions of the desert still kept on the mind even of the most civilized period of the nation.

Little conception as we can form of its architectural effect, we cannot doubt that whatever light is to be thrown upon it must be derived from four styles. 1. Of the influence of Phœnician art, the Tyrian workmen are a sufficient guarantee. However much they may have conformed themselves to the general requirements of the Jewish worship, yet the outward details of the architecture must have been influenced by their national peculiarities. Analogous cases may be noticed in the building of the Alcazar at Seville, by the more civilized workmen of Granada, or of some of our English cathedrals by the more civilized workmen of

The brazen altar and the brazen gates of the two courts are ascribed to Solomon himself. (1 Kings vii. 15-45; 2 Chr. iv. 1-10.)

¹ As Louis XIV. is said to have burnt the accounts of the Palace of Versailles without looking into them.

² 1 Kings v. 17; Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 3, § 2; *B. J.* v. 5, § 1.

³ This was recognized down to a very late period. See *Wisdom* ix. 8.

⁴ Mr. Fergusson has shown (*art. TEMPLE* in the *Dict. of the Bible*) that the dimensions of the Temple were exactly double those of the Tabernacle.

France. Scanty as is our knowledge of Phœnician architecture, it enables us to trace resemblances which can hardly be accidental. Whenever in coins or histories we get a representation¹ of a Phœnician temple, it always has a pillar or pillars standing before or within it. Such in Solomon's temple were Jachin and Boaz. 2. In common with the Assyrian architecture² was the mixed use of wood and metal, which alone were used in the Temple for sculpture. 3. Solomon's intercourse with Egypt renders probable the connection which the actual resemblance almost proves. The courts, the cloisters, the enormous porch, the pyramidal form of the towers,³ the painted sculptures on the wall, the successive chambers, the darkness of the adytum, are all found in Thebes or Ipsambul. 4. One other style remains which illustrates the Jewish temple, by likeness, not of architecture, but of design. If the mystery and massiveness of the temple can be found nowhere but in the old Pagan sanctuaries, the pleasant precincts, the means of ablution, and the almost universal absence of imagery, can be found nowhere but in the sanctuaries of the only other existing Semitic religion, — the mosques of Islam.

The result of these combinations was a building unlike any modern edifice, unlike in many respects even to the Temple of Herod, which succeeded, and which must be carefully distinguished from it.

On the eastern side was a colonnade or cloister, which formed the only outward barrier. The later kings continued it all round; but this alone

The colonnade.

The court.

¹ Thus the Temple at Gath (Judg. xvi. 29), at Gades (Philostrat. Vit. Apoll. v. 5; Silius Ital. Bell. Pun. III. 14, 22, 32), and at Tyre (Herod. ii. 44). See Bähr's *Solomonische Tempel*, p. 250.

² Fergusson's *Handbook of Architecture*.

³ Ezek. xlii. 4, 5, 6.

was ascribed to Solomon,¹ and his name therefore lingered on the spot long afterwards, and even in the time of the second Temple, gave to it or the cloister built upon its ruins the title of Solomon's Portico.²

This portico opened on a large quadrangle, surrounded by a wall, partly of stone, partly of cedar. Here was retained a relic of the ancient sanctity attached to trees, — a vestige of Canaanite and patriarchal feeling clinging to the stillness and solemnity of a sacred grove. Like the present Haram-es-Sherîf at Jerusalem, it was planted with trees, amongst which the spreading cedar, the stately palm, and the venerable olive, were conspicuous.³ This may have suggested or continued the peculiar image of the covert or lair of the Lion of Judah. "In Salem is His leafy covert, and His rocky "den in Zion."⁴ Under those trees, too, in the darker days of Jerusalem, were doubtless established the licentious rites of the Phœnician divinities.

Within this was a smaller court, on the highest ridge of the hill. Here was the sacred rock bought by David from Araunah, the ancient Jebusite king, on the day of the cessation of the pestilence. It was, as it were, the reverse of Naboth's vineyard. The memory that David had acquired it by just purchase, not by unjust acquisition, long remained in Oriental traditions;⁵ and the rocky threshing-floor of the heathen Prince thus emerging in the very centre of the sanctuary was a monument of the homage paid to Justice and Toleration in the heart of the worship of JEHOVAH.

On this platform rose the altar; probably the very

¹ Josephus, *B. J.* v. 5; § 1.

⁴ Ps. lxxvi. 2.

² John x. 23; Acts iii. 11; v. 12.

⁵ For the fine Mussulman legend

³ Ps. lii. 8; xcii. 12, 13. For the birds, Ps. lxxxiv. 3.

representing the same idea, see Jelladdin, *Temple of Jerusalem*, 27.

one erected by David, as there is no special record of its elevation by Solomon. There was something about it, whether from this circumstance or ^{The altar.} its general rudeness, which seems to have made it out of proportion to the general grandeur of the Temple.¹ Apparently, without regard to the Mosaic law, it was mounted by steps.² It was a square chest of wood, plated outside with brass, filled inside with stones and earth,³ with the fire on a brass grating at the top; the whole placed on a mass of rough stone. The rudeness of the structure bore witness to the antiquity of the rites celebrated upon it. It represented at once a table and a hearth, "the Table of the Lord,"⁴ on which the dead animal was roasted and burnt, after having been fastened to one of the four square projections, which under the name of "horns" protruded from each corner,⁵ — a vast hearth on which to light the sacred fire, which went up, spirelike, to the sky,⁶ "the Hearth⁷ of God."

It was much larger than the ancient altar of the Tabernacle, but was itself to be displaced hereafter⁸ by a still larger one, — as though it grew with the growth of the worship. South of the altar was the brazen laver,

¹ It is mentioned in 2 Chr. iv. 1, vi. 12; and in 1 Kings viii. 22, ix. 25; but not at all in 1 Kings vi., vii. If it was the old one, this would account for its being too small in proportion (1 Kings viii. 64; 2 Kings xvi. 14).

² Ezek. xliii. 17; Mishna, *Middoth*. Comp. Exod. xx. 26.

³ *Middoth*, iii. 4. A grate represents the altar in the embroidered draperies of the Samaritan synagogue.

⁴ Mal. i. 7, 12; Ezek. xlv. 16.

⁵ Ex. xxvii. 2; Ps. cxviii. 27.

⁶ Ewald, *Alterthümer*, 118; Lev. vi. 12, 13.

⁷ *Ariel*, Ezek. xliii. 15, 16 (Heb.); Isaiah xxix. 1.

⁸ 2 Chron. iv. 1, compared with Exod. xxvii. 1. In the later Temple it was superseded by one more than twice as large. The smaller size, Ezek. xliii. 13–17, may be explained by supposing it to relate to the brazen part; the larger, in 2 Chr. iv. 1, to the whole rock or stonework.

supported on twelve brazen bulls, and apparently pouring forth its water into a basin below, which must have been as large as those beneath the fountains in Paris and in Rome. This was used for the ablutions of the priests, as they walked to and fro barefooted over the rocky platform. On each side were the ten lesser movable vessels of brass, on wheels, for the washing of the entrails.¹ They are described with great detail, as if they were considered wonderful works of art. These and the laver were trophies of the victories of David, being made from the brass which he brought back from the conquest of Syria.² They were remarkable as the works of Hiram, who accordingly, as a Tyrian sculptor, did not scruple to introduce bulls in the greater laver, and bulls and lions and cherubs in the lesser, probably as the emblems of the two chief tribes.

Round about the lesser court, in two or three stories, raised above each other, were chambers for the priests³ and other persons of rank, as in a college or monastery. In the corners were the kitchens and boiling apparatus.⁴ Each had brazen gates.⁵

Thus far on the whole there was only an enlarged representation of the courts of the Tabernacle. But now, behind the altar, all was new. The space immediately beyond was deemed especially sacred,⁶ as intervening between the altar, the centre of the national worship, and the porch of the Temple, which enshrined the presence of the Invisible. Overshadowing this space, there rose — instead of the Tabernacle, half tent, half hovel

¹ The meaning of the name of the engine which supported them (*Mechonoth*) is lost, and is left untranslated both in the LXX. and in Josephus (*Ant.* viii. 3, § 6).

² 1 Chron. xviii. 8.

³ 2 Chron. xxxi. 11; Jer. xxxvi. 10; Ezek. xl. 45; xlii. 1.

⁴ Ezek. xlvi. 20–24.

⁵ 2 Chr. iv. 9.

⁶ Joel ii. 17; Ezek. viii. 16; Matt. xxiii. 35.

— a solid building — the “Temple,” properly so called, the *Palace* of the Lord.¹ The outside view must, if we can trust the numbers, have been according to modern notions, strangely out of proportion. In front towered the porch, to the prodigious height of more than two hundred feet. Behind was a lower edifice, lessening in height as it approached its extremity. Half-way up its height, and perhaps even over its roof, small chambers, entered only from without, clustered like the shops round the walls of continental cathedrals. A sandal-wood door on the south was the approach to them, and a winding staircase led thence to the second and third stories, into gilded chambers, accessible to the King alone.² The successive diminutions in the thickness of the walls of the Temple enabled the chambers³ to increase in size, in proportion to the elevation of the stories. With the exception of the tower, which presented a singular alternation of stone and timber,⁴ the exterior of the structure more nearly resembled the Tabernacle, its massive stone walls being entirely cased in cedar, so as to give it the appearance of a rough log-house.⁵

The porch, the most startling novelty of the building, was, as being external to the rest, the part in which foreign architects were allowed the freest The porch. play. In materials it was probably suggested by the Assyrian, in elevation by the Egyptian architecture, whilst the Tyrian sculptors displayed their art to the full in the two elaborate pillars. They stood immedi-

¹ *Hical*, the Greek *ναός*, as distinguished from the surrounding *τερόν*. The word *hical* is used for a *palace* in 1 Kings xxi. 1; 2 Kings xx. 18; Ps. xlv. 8, 15.

² 1 Kings vi. 8; Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 3, § 2.

³ 1 Kings vi. 6.

⁴ *Ibid.* vii. 12.

⁵ Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 2, § 2; see Reland, *Palestina*, 313.

ately under the porch, within, but not supporting it, and were called either from the workmen, or from their own firmness and solidity, Jachin and Boaz. Their golden pedestals, their bright brazen shafts, their rich capitals, their light festoons, were thought prodigies of art so remarkable,¹ that the Israelites were never weary of recounting their glories. The gates of the porch usually stood wide open.² Hung round it, inside, were probably the shields and spears that had been used in David's army,³ perhaps also the sword and the skull of the gigantic Philistine,⁴ which had originally been laid up in the Tabernacle.

Within, another pair of folding-doors (made of cypress, with their door-posts, which fitted immediately behind the square pedestals of the pillars) led into the Holy Place. It would have been almost dark, in spite of a few loopholes⁵ above, but for an innovation now first ventured upon. In the place of the original single seven-branched candlestick, ten⁶ now stood on ten golden tables, five on each side. The light of these revealed the interior. As without, so within, the whole was lined with wood; the walls with cedar, the floors with cypress or deal.⁷ The Phœnician workmen had rendered it as nearly as they could like one of the huge vessels to which their own city of Tyre was compared by the Hebrew Prophets.⁸ But inside, the wood was overlaid with gold, and on this were

¹ 1 Kings vii. 15-22; 2 Kings xviii. 16; xxv. 17; 2 Chr. iii. 15-17; Jer. lii. 21-23.

² 2 Chr. xxix. 7; Isa. vi. 1.

³ 2 Chr. xxiii. 9; 2 Kings xi. 10. These were distinct from the shields taken from Hadad-ezer.

⁴ 1 Sam. xvii. 54; xxi. 9.

⁵ 1 Kings vi. 4.

⁶ Ibid. vii. 49; 2 Chr. iv. 20. These also are said to have been seven-branched (Eupolemus, in Eusebius, *Præp. Ev.* ix. 34).

⁷ 1 Kings vi. 15, 18.

⁸ Ezek. xxvii.

sculptured forms which nearly resemble the winged creatures¹ and mysterious trees familiar to us in Assyrian sculpture. The Cherub with the alternate face of a man and of a lion, and the Palm, then, as afterwards in the Maccabæan² age, the emblem of Palestine, were worked alternately along the walls. At the end of the chamber were the two symbols of nourishment and feasting, which in a more tangible and material form was represented by the sacrifices:—as, on the rough altar outside, the great sacrificial feasts were of animal flesh, so within, the daily offering was of the consecrated loaves on their gilded table, the daily cloud of incense from the gilded altar.

A “wall of partition,” such as the lighter structure of the tent had not allowed, shut in the innermost sanctuary. But this too was penetrated by folding-doors of olive-wood; over which hung a party-colored curtain, embroidered with cherubs and flowers.³

He who in the progress of the building ventured to look in would have seen a small square chamber, like an Egyptian adytum,⁴ absolutely dark except by the light received through this aperture. But in the darkness,⁵ two huge golden forms would have been discerned, in imitation, on a grand scale, of the cherubs which had formed the covering of the ancient Ark. But, unlike those movable figures, these stood firm on their feet; one on the north, one on the south side, waiting to receive the Ark, which was destined to occupy the vacant space between them. Their vast

¹ Ezek. xli. 18–20. All knowledge of the cherubs was lost in the time of Josephus (*Ant.* viii. 3, § 3).

² See the Maccabæan coins.

³ 1 Kings vi. 31; 2 Chron. iii. 14; Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 3, § 3.

⁴ *Debir*, *i. e.* not “oracle,” but “innermost part.”

⁵ In the later Temple, workmen for repairs were let into it blindfold (*Middoth*).

wings extended over it and joined in a car or throne, called the "chariot¹ of the cherubs," to represent the throne of Him who was represented as flying and sitting upon the wings of the wind, and the extension of His protecting shelter over His people, — "Thou shalt be "safe under His feathers." A protuberance of rough rock or stone waited to receive the Ark itself.² To mark the sanctity of this extremity of the Temple, the chambers which ran round the rest of the building were not allowed to lean against the outer walls of the sanctuary, but, as in the case of an Egyptian adytum, a passage was left free all round it outside.

In turning from the building to the history of its erection, every stage of its progress is recorded. The Dedic-
tion. The magnitude of the event is marked by the fact that now, for the first time since the Exodus, we have the years and months recorded. The foundation-stone was laid in the month Zif (May) of the fourth year of Solomon's reign. It was completed in the month Bul (November) of the eleventh year. And the solemn dedication took place in the month Ethanim (October) of the succeeding year. This interval of nearly a year took place no doubt in order to accommodate it to the great national Festival of the Tabernacles. The whole population came up from the remotest extremities of the empire.³ The two solemnities were joined; the extraordinary taking the place of the ordinary festival,⁴ and the ordinary festival being thus postponed to the following week, so as to make altogether a prolonged holiday of a fortnight.⁵

¹ 1 Chr. xxviii. 18; compare Ps. xviii. 10, xcix. 1; Isa. vi., xxxvii. 16; Ezek. i. 26; Eccles. xlix. 8.

² Mishna, *Joma*, v. 2.

³ 1 Kings vii. 65.

⁴ As afterwards in the dedication of the Temple of Bethel by Jeroboam, 1 Kings xii. 32. See Lecture XXIX.

⁵ 2 Kings viii. 1, 65; 2 Chr. vii. 8,

9, 10.

It was on the fourteenth day of the seventh month that the festival opened. Two processions advanced from different quarters. The one came from the lofty height of Gibeon, bearing with it the relics of the old pastoral worship, now to be disused forever. The Sacred Tent, tattered no doubt, and often repaired, with its goats' hair covering and boards of acacia wood, was carried aloft. Together with it were brought the ancient brazen altar, the candlestick, and the table of shewbread, and also the brazen serpent. A heathen tradition described that the King himself had inaugurated the removal¹ with solemn sacrifices.

This train, bearing the venerable remains of the obsolete system, was joined on Mount Zion by another still more stately procession, carrying ^{The procession.} the one relic which was to unite the old and the new together. From its temporary halting-place under the tent erected by David on Mount Zion, came forth the Ark of acacia-wood, covered with its two small winged figures, supported as of old by the Levites on their shoulders. Now, as before when it had removed from the house of Obed-edom, the King and people celebrated its propitious start by sacrifices, — but on a far greater scale, — “sheep and oxen that could not be numbered “for multitude.”² The road (such was the traditional picture preserved by Josephus³) was flooded with the streams of blood. The air was darkened and scented with the clouds of incense; the songs and dances were unintermitted.

Onwards the procession moved “up” the slope of the hill. It entered, doubtless, through the eastern gate-

¹ Eupolemus (in Eusebius, *Præp.* Ev. ix. 34). He says *Σηλωμ*, Shiloh, but this is a natural confusion for Gibeon.

² 1 Kings viii. 5.

³ *Ant.* viii. 4, § 1.

way. It ascended court after court. It entered the Holy Place. And now, before the Ark disappeared for the last time from the eyes of the people, the awful reverence which had kept any inquisitive eyes from prying into the secrets of that sacred Chest gave way before the united feelings of necessity and of irresistible curiosity. The ancient lid formed by the cherubs was to be removed; and a new one without them to be substituted, to fit it for its new abode. It was taken off, and in so doing, the interior of the Ark was seen by Israelite eyes for the first time for more than four centuries, perhaps for the last time forever. There were various relics of incalculable interest which are recorded to have been laid up within, or beside it,¹—the pot of manna, the staff or sceptre of the tribe of Aaron, and the golden censer of Aaron. These all were gone; lost, it may be, in the Philistine captivity. But it still contained a monument more sacred than any of these. In the darkness of the interior lay the two granite blocks from Mount Sinai, covered with the ancient characters in which were graven the Ten Commandments. “There was nothing in the Ark save these.” On these the lid was again shut down, and with this burden, the pledge of the Law which was the highest manifestation of the Divine Presence, the Ark moved within the veil, and was seen no more.”² In that dark receptacle, two gigantic guardians were, as we have seen, waiting to receive it. The two golden cherubs were spreading forth their wings to take the place of the diminutive figures which had crouched over it up to this time. On a rough unhewn projection of the rock,

¹ Heb. ix. 4. It may, however, be the testimony” (Exod. xvi. 33; Num. xvii. 10).
that this is an erroneous inference from “before the Lord,” and “before

² See Lecture VII.

under this covering, the Ark was thrust¹ in, and placed lengthways, on what is called "the place of its rest."² Then the retiring Priests, as a sign that it was to go out thence no more, drew forth³ from it the staves or handles on which they had borne it to and fro; and although the staves themselves remained within the veil, the ends could just be seen protruding through the door, in token that its long wanderings were over. They remained long afterwards, even to the later days of the monarchy,⁴ and guided the steps of the Chief Priest as he entered in the darkness. The final settlement of the Ark was the pledge that the Lord God of Israel had given rest to His people—in the new capital of Jerusalem—and also rest to the Levites, that they should no more carry the Tabernacle⁵ to and fro, but minister in the fixed service of the Temple.

The relics from Gibeon were for the most part stored up in the sacred treasuries. The Altar⁶ of incense and the table of shewbread alone were retained for use, and planted in the Holy Place. The Brazen Serpent was set up, if not in the Temple, yet somewhere in Jerusalem; with an altar before it on which incense was burnt.⁷

The Priests who had thus deposited their sacred burdens came out of the porch, and took up their place in the position which afterwards became consecrated to them,—“between the porch and the altar.”⁸ Round

¹ Mishna, *Joma*, v. 2.

² Ps. cxxxii. 8, 14.

³ The words “drew forth,” however, are taken by Ewald and Thenius to mean “elongated.” The LXX. calls the staves τὰ ἄγυα and τὰ ἡγυασμένα in 1 Kings viii. 7, 8, but in 2 Chr. v. 9, οἱ ἀναφορεῖς.

⁴ “Even to this day,” 1 Kings viii. 8; 2 Chr. v. 9 (see Keil *ad loc.*).

⁵ 1 Chr. xxiii. 25, 26.

⁶ Josephus (*Ant.* viii. 4, § 1) adds “the candlestick.”

⁷ 2 Kings xviii. 4.

⁸ Joel ii. 17.

about them in the open court stood the innumerable spectators. Opposite them, on the east of the altar, stood the band of musicians, clothed¹ in white. They blended the new and gentler notes of David's music with the loud trumpet blast of the earlier age.

And now came the King himself. He came, we cannot doubt, with all the state which in later times is described as accompanying the Jewish monarchs on their entrance to the Temple. He started from his Palace — from the Porch, which by this time, perhaps, was just finished. The guard of five hundred went before, at their head was the chief minister² of the King; the chief at once of the royal guard and of the royal household, distinguished by his splendid mantle and sash. He distributed to the guards the five hundred golden targets which hung in the porch, and which they bore aloft as they went; and then the doors of the gateway were thrown open by the same great functionary, who alone had in his custody the key of the house of David, the key of state which he bore upon his shoulder.³ Like the Sultan or the Khalîf, in the grand processions of Islam, the King followed. Over the valley which separated the palace from the Temple, there was a bridge or causeway uniting the two.⁴ It “was the way by which the King went up to the House of the Lord,” and the magnificent steps at each end, of red sandal-

¹ 2 Chr. v. 12. Compare xxix. 26, and Amos vi. 5, with Dr. Pusey's note.

² 1 Kings xiv. 27, 28. See Lecture XXVI.

³ Isa. xxii. 15, 21, 22.

⁴ Josephus, *Ant.* xiv. 4, § 2; *B. J.* i. 7, § 2; ii. 16, § 3; vi. 6, § 2, 8, § 1. The remains of two arches have been found, which, though doubtless

of later date, are probably the relics of bridges answering to that mentioned. The first is that found by Dr. Robinson at the southwest corner of the Haram area (*Bib. Res.* i. 287, &c.); the second, that recently discovered by Captain Wilson further north, along the same wall, below the *Babel-Katnin*.

wood, were the wonder of the Eastern world.¹ From this he entered "the portico of Solomon."²

Besides the guards who preceded him, there were guards in three detachments, who were stationed at the gate of the palace, at the gate of the Temple court, and at the gate where they halted, probably at the entrance of the inner court.³ Immediately inside that entrance, was fixed on a pillar the royal seat, surmounted by a brazen canopy.⁴ Here the King usually stood. But on the present occasion a variation was made in accordance with the grandeur of the solemnity. A large brazen scaffold⁵ was erected east of the altar; apparently at the entrance of the outer court, where the people were assembled. Here Solomon took his seat.⁶

As the Priests came out, the whole band of musicians and singers burst forth into the joyful strain which forms the burden of the 136th Psalm: The Dedication. "For He is good, and His mercy endureth for ever." At the same instant, it is described that the darkness within the Temple had become insupportable. "The house was filled with a cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord." It was at this moment that Solomon himself first took his part in the dedication. Up to this point, he had been seated on the brazen scaffold, his eyes fixed on the Temple. But now that he heard the announcement that the sign of Divine favor had been perceived, he rose from his place, and broke into a song, or psalm, of which two versions are preserved.⁷ The abruptness, which guaran-

¹ 1 Kings x. 5; 2 Chr. ix. 4, 11.

² Compare the entrance of the Khalif, through the grand approach, open to him only, in the precincts of the mosque of Cordova.

³ 2 Chr. xxiii. 5.

⁴ 2 Kings xi. 14; xxiii. 3 (Heb. "the pillar").

⁵ 2 Chr. vi. 13.

⁶ Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 4, § 2.

⁷ 1 Kings viii. 13. One in the Hebrew text, the other in the LXX. (ver.

tees its antiquity, leaves it in great obscurity. "He knew the sun in heaven. The Lord spake from (or of) His dwelling in darkness." "Build My house; a glorious house for thyself, to dwell in newness;" to which the Hebrew text adds, "I have surely built Thee a house to dwell in, a settled place to abide in for ever." The two fragments together well express the predominant feelings of the moment, — the mysteriousness of the Divine Presence, the novelty of the epoch, and the change from a wandering and primitive to a settled and regular worship. Then he turned and performed the highest sacerdotal act, of solemn benediction. The multitude, prostrate, as it would seem before, rose to receive it. Once again he turned westward, towards the Temple. He stretched forth his hands in the gesture of Oriental prayer, as if to receive the blessings for which he sought, and at the same time exchanged the usual standing-posture of Oriental prayer for the extraordinary one of kneeling, now first mentioned in the Sacred history, and only used in Eastern devotions at the present day in moments of deep humiliation. The prayer itself is one of unprecedented length; and is remarkable as combining the conception of the Infinity of the Divine Presence with the hope that the Divine mercies will be drawn down on the nation by the concentration of the national devotions, and even of the devotion of foreign nations, towards this fixed locality.¹

Then again the Sovereign rose, turned eastward to the people, and bestowed a second benediction.

53), with the statement that it was written in "the Book of the Song."

¹ The alleged later phrases, and still more the variations of the prayer in the Hebrew and the LXX., and

also in the Kings and Chronicles, render it difficult for us to suppose that we have the exact words of Solomon. Still the general substance of the devotions must be his.

And now began the actual consecration of the whole sanctuary by the act of sacrifice. This, being The consecration. in the open court, was the only one in which the whole assembly could take part. It is described in the later accounts that fire descended from Heaven¹ and consumed the whole, and that the people at the sight prostrated themselves, and repeated once more the burden of the Psalm, "For He is good, and His "mercy endureth for ever." The sacred altar being too small for the reception of the victims, the King consecrated a space in the middle of the court (whether outer or inner, does not appear²), and on this ox after ox, it is said, to the number of 22,000, and sheep after sheep, to the number of 120,000, were consumed.³

The Feast of "the Dedication of the Altar," as it was technically called,⁴ lasted for a week, over which time, probably, the enormous mass of sacrificial victims was extended. This again was succeeded by the Festival of the Tabernacles, now celebrated with more than the usual festivities. The mere feasting occasioned by the vast number of victims would be sufficient to mark the grandeur of the Festival. At the close of all, on the twenty-third of the seventh month, the King finally dismissed the people, and received their blessing in turn; and they went away "to their tents" (the pastoral term still lingered), glad and merry of heart, lightening the journey home by songs of joy,⁵ "for all the goodness "that the Lord had done to David his servant, and to "Solomon, and to Israel his people."⁶

¹ 2 Chr. vii. 1, 2; Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 4, § 4.

² 1 Kings viii. 64; 2 Chr. vii. 7.

³ The Khalif Moktader sacrificed

at Mecca 40,000 camels and 50,000 sheep (Burton, *Pilgrimage*, i. 318).

⁴ 2 Chr. vii. 9.

⁵ Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 4, § 6.

⁶ 1 Kings viii. 66; 2 Chr. vii. 10.

A dream, like that which had opened his reign at the ancient and now deserted sanctuary of Gibeon, closed the eventful ceremony. It conveyed the assurance that the Divine Blessing would be granted to the work that was finished, combined with the warning that this Blessing was conditional on the obedience and piety of the nation.¹

As the day of bringing in the Ark to Jerusalem had been the greatest day of the life of David, so the dedication of the Temple was the culminating point of the reign of Solomon. In the whole transaction, nothing is more remarkable than the preëminence of the King himself over every one else. No Khalîf, no Pontiff, could have presided more supremely over the occasion than did Solomon. Zadok never appears. The priests are mentioned only as bearers of the Ark. Even the Prophet Nathan is only mentioned by heathen historians.² The King alone prays, sacrifices, blesses, consecrates. And, as if to keep up the memory of the day, thrice a year, throughout his reign, on the three great festivals, he solemnly entered not only the Temple courts with sacrifices,³ but penetrated into the Holy Place itself, where in later years none but the Priests were allowed to enter, and offered incense on the altar of incense.⁴ It was in accordance with the same principle that he adopted once for all the duties of the Priestly order as originated by David, which continued to the end of the Jewish nation.⁵ It is characteristic of the free and religious spirit of the Jewish Church, that

¹ 1 Kings ix. 2-9; 2 Chr. vii. 12-22.

² Eupolemus, in Eusebius, *Præp. Ev.* ix. 34.

³ 2 Chr. viii. 13.

⁴ Kings ix. 25. This is omitted in 2 Chr. viii. 13.

⁵ 2 Chr. viii. 14; see 1 Chr. xxiii., xxiv.

the organized hierarchical system, though acting from this time, took its rise not from any sacerdotal arrangement, but from that union of King and Priest in the person of Solomon, which had been already foreshadowed in David, and which, in a moral and spiritual sense, was to be realized in the future Messiah.

Such was the Temple of Solomon. Its peculiarities, as a place of worship, are best understood by a succession of contrasts.

It differed from the former sanctuary of the Tabernacle in durability and in splendor. It was a house instead of a tent; a palace instead of a Contrast with the Tabernacle. hovel. It also became the centre of a ceremonial system, which before had existed but very imperfectly. The collegiate buildings for the priests,¹ their weekly courses, their guard by night, their cleaning of the altar, the arrangements for the slaughter of the victims, all date more or less from this time.

On the other hand, it differed from the later Temple of Herod, partly by its more primitive character, partly by its greater freedom. The wooden With Herod's Temple. covering must have retained something of the almost savage appearance of the ancient sanctuary; its dimensions, too, were for the most part the mere double of those of the Tabernacle; whereas the dimensions of the second Temple, at least in its courts and altar, extended beyond all proportion to the original model. But in some important respects there was a wider adoption of foreign ideas in Solomon's Temple than was ever the case before or after. The single candelabrum, which was restored by imitation in the second Temple, was, as we have seen, superseded by ten candlesticks in the first. The colossal cherubic figures in the Holy of

¹ As described in Mishna — *Joma* and *Tamid*. Reland, *Loc. Sacr.* 180.

Holies, as well as the figures of lions and oxen, which appeared for the first time in the outer court of the first Temple, are condemned by Josephus¹ as contrary to the Second Commandment, and, apparently, had no place in Herod's Temple. The adoption of Tyrian and Egyptian architecture in the Temple of Solomon, was only in part retained by the second. The likeness of the ancient sacred grove which adorned the first was entirely removed in the second.² Steps to the altar, which in the Tabernacle³ and in the second Temple were forbidden in accordance with the Levitical law, were allowed by Solomon. The barriers which divided the Gentile worshippers from the outer court, and the women from the inner court, in the second Temple, had no existence in the first. The ancient trophies of war, the shields of David, had disappeared from the porch, and in their place was hung the colossal cluster of golden grapes, which represented the new idea of Israel under the figure of the vine.

Still more forcibly is the peculiarity of the Religion which the Temple represented brought out by its contrasts both with Pagan shrines and Christian churches. Of the two main differences from Pagan Temples, the first was more fully brought out in the sanctuary of Herod than in that of Solomon, but still was conspicuous in both; namely, the absence of any statue or sacred animal to represent the indwelling Divinity. With the exception of the cherubs, which were merely ornamental and symbolical, the awestruck description of Pompey when he entered the Holy of Holies was already true, — *Vacuam sedem, inania arcana.*"⁴

¹ *Ant.* viii. 7, § 5.

³ *Exod.* xx. 26.

² Hecataeus, in Josephus, *c. Apion*, i. § 22.

⁴ Tacitus, *Hist.* v. 9.

The negative theology, so to speak, of the Jewish system, there reached its highest pitch. There was nothing in the innermost sanctuary — and yet that nothing was everything. The second distinction was the Unity of the Temple. A well-known modern writer has spoken of “the Temples” of Judea. It would have been difficult for a single letter to have betrayed so much ignorance of a whole religious system. And this too was of supreme importance in its effects on the nation. Not only did the fixedness of the building act as a check on the local superstition which had previously attached to the Ark and to the Tabernacle, moved about as they were like charms from one scene of danger to another, to protect the hosts or the Kings of Israel; but the centralization of the religious feeling and life of the nation on a single spot, acted as a protest against the tendency to isolated and multiplied forms of worship, to which, as we see from the subsequent history, the Israelites, like all other nations, were so prone. And the Temple became in consequence a symbol of the unity of religious and national life, such as no other ancient sanctuary could exhibit. The great size of the courts compared with the building itself; the chambers and guards; the union on one spot of Forum, Fortress, University, Sanctuary, was peculiar to the Temple of Jerusalem. This was the full meaning of the oracle, here probably first delivered, and the key-note of much of the subsequent history. “In this house, and in Jerusalem, will I put my name for ever.”¹

These were the points of difference between the Temple and all Pagan sanctuaries. In most other outward respects, as it resembled them, so it differed from all Christian churches, though more nearly

With
Christian
Churches.

¹ 2 Kings xxi. 4, 7; compare 1 Kings viii. 29; ix. 3; xi. 36.

resembling those of Eastern, than of Western Christendom. In the outer courts, the widest difference was caused by the presence of the sacrificial system in the Jewish, and its absence in the Christian worship. Every one knows the peaceful aspect of the precincts of a Christian cathedral. It needs a strong stretch of imagination to conceive the arrangements for sacrifice, which filled the Temple courts with sheep, and oxen, and goats, with blazing furnaces, with pools of blood, with masses of skins and offal, with columns of steam and smoke.¹ And again, the contrast of the darkness and smallness of the edifice of the actual Temple with the light and the size of Christian churches, arose, as a matter of course, from the circumstance that the worship of the Jew was carried on round the altar in the outer court; whereas the worship of the Christian is carried on round the Holy Table within the inner chancel. The Jewish Temple would have been contained five times over within one of our great cathedrals. Christian congregations of men, women, and children penetrate, even in Eastern churches, into the interior of the building, where in the Jewish sanctuary none but the priests could enter; in all Western churches, even into the recesses where the High Priest could hardly enter.

But there are points of connection as well as points of contrast, between the Jewish Temple and a Christian church.

The Temple itself became no doubt the object of a local veneration, at times amounting almost to idolatry. The Jews regarded it as a talisman that was to guard them in spite of all their sins.² The Jews in the siege of Titus clung to it as a refuge in the last agony of their nation. The Jews at the present day recall its

¹ See Lecture XXXV.

² Jer. vii. 4.

glories, and murmur their wailings at the crevices of its walls, "with a tenacity unmatched by that of any other people to any other building in the ancient world."¹ But, nevertheless, in this excess of local devotion, there was a spiritual and moral element.

The very combination of a spiritual religion with material splendor and foreign art in such a building, carried with it the germs of all Christian architecture, and the principle of national worship in fixed places forever. In some forms of the Christian Church, even its outward details have been perpetuated. The name at least of the "altar" has been retained in the Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches, and, although to a very limited and doubtful extent, in our own. The name and partly the idea of "the Holy of Holies" has been copied in the Eastern Church. The architects of the middle ages, and, it is said, the Freemasons of our own time, made a boast of tracing back their legendary lore and strange usages to those of Solomon's Temple. And the first great ecclesiastical builder of Christendom, the Emperor Justinian, when he had finished the first metropolitan cathedral of the world, recurred in thought to his first imperial prototype, and exclaimed, "I have vanquished thee, O Solomon." The chief entrance to the national sanctuary of England was known by the name of "Solomon's Porch."

The concentration of public life round the Temple raised the whole idea of worship from the edifice to the people who encompassed, and, as it were, absorbed it. The transfer of the image of "the Temple" to the congregation or community of the Christian Church was such as could not have taken place, had the Jewish wor-

Spiritual aspect of the Temple worship.

¹ Mr. Fergusson, art. TEMPLE, in *Dict. of Bible*.

ship been scattered through many holy places, instead of being confined to one particular spot, and that the capital of the nation. "The living stones," "the spiritual house," "the whole building fitly framed together, growing into a holy Temple," on its "chief corner-stone," "the pillars in the Temple of God,"¹ the reiterated expression of "edification," in the first instance derived almost literally from the stones, silently fitted together, and rising stage above stage, in the sacred edifice, — these images, so full of meaning, could never, humanly speaking, have occurred to the Christian Apostles, had the waving curtains of the nomadic Tent not been replaced by the solid structure of the Temple. They spring directly from those great buildings and those substructions, which still "remain for all time"² in a yet higher sense, through this application of them, than Solomon or his successors could possibly have anticipated.

There is yet another point in which Solomon impressed on his design a scope and meaning of lasting importance. He had the perception, so rare in those who undertake works of this magnitude, to see it in its due proportions to the higher truth which it represented. The first public recognition of Prayer as distinct from sacrifice — of the spiritual as distinct from the ceremonial mode of approaching God — is the Prayer of Solomon at the Dedication of the Temple. And further, in this moment of the extremest triumph of ritual and material worship, was uttered one of the most spiritual truths that the Old Testament contains. "Behold the Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 5; Eph. ii. 20, 21; iv. ² Joseph. *Ant.* xv. 11, 3.
16; Rev. iii. 12.

“have builded.”¹ The combination of the two ideas in this remarkable instance has to some extent held them together since. The very magnificence of the occasion which then set them forth is a guarantee that they need never be divided. And therefore, when the first voice arose in the Christian Church to proclaim the annihilation of the local sanctity even of the Temple itself, this absolute assertion of spiritual freedom was based on the recognition of Solomon’s place in the long succession of the founders of the Holy Places of Israel. “Solomon built Him an house,” says St. Stephen. “Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands. . . . Heaven is My throne, and earth My footstool; what house will ye build Me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of My rest? Hath not My hand made all these things?”²

“Pull down the nests, and the rooks will fly away,” is the well-known maxim which is said to have shattered to the ground the cathedral of St. Andrew’s, and the abbeys and churches of Scotland. But Solomon saw that even the splendor of the Temple might be a safeguard, not a destruction, of the highest ideas of spiritual worship. There is a superstition in denouncing religious art, as well as in clinging to it. There is no inherent connection between ugliness and godliness. There was a danger of superstition in the rough planks and black hair-cloth of the Tabernacle, closer at hand than in the gilded walls and marble towers of the Temple. There is a wisdom in the policy of John Knox; but there is a still higher wisdom in the Prayer of Solomon.

¹ 1 Kings viii. 27; 2 Chr. vi. 18.

² Acts vii. 47–50.

LECTURE XXVIII.

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON.

THE reign of Solomon has sometimes been called the Augustan age of the Jewish nation. But there was this peculiarity, that Solomon was not only its Augustus, but its Aristotle. Fabulous as is the Rabbinical tradition, it has curiously caught hold of a truth in describing how, when Alexander took Jerusalem, he captured the works of Solomon, and sent them to Aristotle, who thence derived all that was good in his philosophy.¹

Jewish literature had already begun to unfold itself in a systematic form at the first beginning of the monarchy. Music and poetry were specially developed and centred in the Prophetic schools of Samuel; and to the earlier warlike bursts of the poetic spirit of the nation, had been now added David, the first founder of the Sacred Poetry of Judea and of the world. The Book of Judges, at least, had been composed in its present form, and the first distinct notices of historical narrative appear in the record of the lost works of Samuel, Gad, and Nathan.

But, with the accession of Solomon, a new world of thought was opened to the Israelites. The curtain which divided them from the surrounding nations was, as we have seen, suddenly rent asunder. The wonders of Egypt, the commerce of Tyre, the romance of Arabia,

¹ Fabricius, *Cod. Pseud.* ii. 1019.

may, it is even possible, the Homeric age of Greece, became visible. Of this, the first and most obvious result was the growth of architecture. But the general effects on the whole mind of the people must have been greater still. A new direction seems to have been given to Israelite thought. Prophets and Psalmists retire into the background, and their place is taken by the new power called by the name of "Wisdom." Its two conspicuous examples are the wisdom of Egypt and the wisdom of the Children of the East, that is, of the Idumæan¹ Arabs. Four renowned sages appear as its exponents. Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol.² It would almost seem as if a kind of college had been founded for this special purpose, — a "house of wisdom on "seven pillars."³ A class of men sprang up, distinct both from Priest and Prophet, under the name of "the Wise."⁴ Their teaching, their manner of life was unlike that of either of those two powerful orders. The thing and the name had been almost unknown before. In a restricted sense, the word had been used of the Danite architects of the Tabernacle,⁵ and in a somewhat larger sense of two⁶ or three remarkable persons in David's reign. But from this time forward, the word occurs in the sacred writings at least three hundred times. What it was will best be perceived by seeing it in its greatest representative. A change must have come over the nation any way through the new world which he opened. But it was fixed and mag-

¹ 1 Kings iv. 30; comp. Jer. xlix. 7; Obad. 8.

² 1 Kings iv. 30.

³ Proverbs ix. 1.

⁴ *Hacâmim*; Prov. i. 6; xiii. 20; xv. 12; xxii. 17; Isa. xxix. 14; Jer. xviii.

18; (comp. Ezek. vii. 26.) See Bruch, *Weisheitslehre der Hebräer*, p. 48, 49.

⁵ Exod. xxxi. 3, 6.

⁶ 2 Sam. xiv. 2; xx. 16.

nified by finding such a mind to receive it. His wisdom excelled the "wisdom" of any one of his time. From his early years its germs had been recognized. It may be that there was something hereditary in the gift. "Prudence"¹ was one of the conspicuous qualities of his father, and of his two cousins, the sons of Shimeah. The almost supernatural sagacity of Ahithophel may have been in his mother's family, and (if we may apply to Solomon the advice given to King Lemuel² by his mother) Bathsheba herself must have been worthy of her husband and her son. "Do according to thy wisdom. . . . Thou art a wise man and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him,"³ — are amongst his father's charges to him in his youth. "The Lord hath given unto David a wise son," is Hiram's congratulation.⁴ If we may take as literal the description in the Book of Proverbs, David had foreseen the importance of this gift for his son, and repeatedly urged it upon him: "Get wisdom, get understanding; wisdom is the principal thing; get wisdom; with all thy getting, get understanding. She shall be to thy head an ornament of praise; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee."⁵

I. The first characteristic of this wisdom was carefully defined by Solomon himself in the dream His justice.
at Gibeon: "An understanding heart, to *judge* the people, to discern *judgment*." This was the original meaning of the word. It was the calm, judicial discretion, which was intended to supersede the passionate, chivalrous, irregular impulses of the former age. The

¹ The word translated "wisely" in 1 Sam. xviii. 5, 14, 15, 30, is not that which is so rendered in the case of Solomon.

² Prov. xxxi. 1. Lemuel is iden-

tified with Solomon by the Jewish interpreters.

³ 1 Kings ii. 6, 9.

⁴ Ibid. v. 7.

⁵ Prov. iv. 5-9.

maladministration of justice by the sons of Samuel had been one ground for the establishment of the monarchy. In Solomon's reign, it seemed as if the change were to be completely justified. The first example was the keen-sighted appeal to the instincts of nature, in the judgment between the two mothers. Of a like kind is the Oriental tradition¹ which describes how he peacefully adjudicated between two claimants to the same treasure, by determining that the son of the one should marry the daughter of the other. "The poor," "the poor," "the needy," "the oppressed," "the needy," "the poor," "the helpless," "the poor," "the needy," "the needy," "the sufferers from violence and deceit," are mentioned with pathetic reiteration as under his especial protection — "judged," "saved," "delivered," "spared," "redeemed" by him; "precious shall their blood be in his sight."² In the Proverbs it occurs again and again. "The King by *judgment* establisheth "the land."³ "The throne of the King shall be established in *justice*."⁴ "The King that faithfully judgeth "the poor, his throne shall be established for ever."⁵ In later times, this image has been either superseded by his more splendid qualities, or overcast by the gloom of his later years. But in his own reign, it must have been the basis of his greatness. "All Israel heard "of the judgment which the King had judged, and "they feared the King," — young as he was, — "for they "saw that the *wisdom* of God was in him to *do judgment*." And not only in his own age, but long afterwards, did the recollection of that serene reign keep alive the idea of a just king before the eyes of the people, and enable

¹ Weil's *Legends*, 164.

⁴ Prov. xxv. 5.

² Ps. lxxii. 2, 4, 12, 13, 14.

⁵ Ibid. xxix. 14.

³ Prov. xxix. 4.

them to understand how there should once again appear at the close of their history a still greater Son of David. When the Prophet describes that this new Prince of the house of Jesse is to be endowed, as Solomon, with "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord," the special manifestation of His spirit is that "he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: . . . and righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."¹ When we reflect how slowly Christendom has arrived at perceiving the paramount importance of Justice, how many centuries passed before it was applied at all to matters of religion, how reluctant we are even now to acknowledge it as the crowning grace of Christian civilization, how unwilling to admit it as the rule of Christian controversies, we shall see how far beyond the age was this distinct recognition of it in the Hebrew Scriptures; however much it may often seem to have taken flight from the arguments and the practices of the Christian Church, we may still shelter ourselves under its precedents, so firmly established by Solomon in the Church of the Jews.

II. Closely allied with this is another characteristic of the wisdom of Solomon, his "largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore."² This breadth of view is one of the aspects which "wisdom" assumes in the only case where it is expressly named in the reign of David. When Joab invoked the aid of the "wise" woman of Tekoah, to

His comprehensiveness.

¹ Isa. xi. 1-5.

² 1 Kings iv. 29.

reconcile David to his son, her whole argument is based on the grandeur of the large and comprehensive grasp with which a king should treat the complex difficulties of human character. She speaks of the irreparable death which is the universal lot of all men, "as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." She appeals to the universal sympathy of God for His lost creatures; "He doth devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him." She appeals to the superhuman "wisdom" of David, as able to hear and bear with good and evil; and "to know" — not this or that form of temper only — but "all things that are in the earth."¹ That dialogue contains the germ of Solomon's greatness. His "wisdom" seems to have supplied to him something of that moral elevation of sentiment which otherwise was peculiar to the Prophetical Office. Founder, as in a certain sense he was, of the Holy Places and hierarchal system of Israel, yet his policy has never, even by the most suspicious of modern critics, been charged with superstition or undue submission to the sacerdotal order. The sanctity of the right of asylum, in the cases of Joab and Adonijah,² he fearlessly disregarded. The succession of one branch of the Aaronic family he rudely broke asunder. In the Temple, as we have seen, he never allowed its external magnificence³ to outweigh his sense of the spiritual character of the Divinity, or of the moral obligations of man. "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." This maxim of the Proverbs⁴ was a bold saying then, it is a bold saying still; but it well unites the wisdom of

¹ 2 Sam. xiv. 2, 14, 17 (Heb.), 20.

² See Lecture XXVI.

³ See Lecture XXVII.

⁴ Prov. xxi. 3.

Solomon with that of his father David in the 51st Psalm, and with the inspiration of the later Prophets.

III. Coextensive with the all-embracing character of Solomon's wisdom, was its far-spread fame, and its variety of parts. Both alike are spoken of, the one as the counterpart of the other. "Thy soul covered the whole earth, and filled it with dark parables. . . . The countries marvelled at thee for thy interpretations, and songs, and proverbs, and parables."¹

1. Of all these outward forms, that which seems to have gathered the widest renown in his own time was the questioning and answering, "the interpretations," of hard questions and riddles. The climax of the definition of wisdom is "the understanding of a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings."² The kings and chiefs around seem to have been stimulated by his example, or by their example to have stimulated him, to carry on this kind of Socratic dialogue with each other. Examples of them seem to be found in the Book of Proverbs, especially in the words of Agur. "What are the six things that the Lord hateth?"³ "What are the two daughters of the horseleech?" "What are the three things that are never satisfied? the three things that are too wonderful? the three things that disquiet the earth? the four things that are little and wise? the four things that are comely in going?"⁴ The historians of Tyre recorded that

¹ Eccclus. xlvii. 14-17.

² Prov. i. 6.

³ Ibid. vi. 16.

⁴ Ibid. xxx. 15, 16, 18, 21, 24, 29.

Compare in the Mussulman legends — "What is Everything and what is Nothing?" (Answer, "God and the

world.") "Who is something and who is less than nothing?" (Answer, "The believer and the hypocrite") "What is the vilest and what the most beautiful thing?" (Answer, "The apostasy of a believer — the repentance of a sinner.") Weil, 166.

this interchange of riddles went on constantly between Solomon and Hiram, each being under the engagement to pay a forfeit of money for every riddle that he could not solve. Solomon got the better of Hiram till Hiram set to work a Tyrian boy, the younger son of Abdemon, who both solved the riddles of Solomon, and set others which Solomon could not answer.¹ But the most remarkable instance was one which has left its traces in both the Old and New Testament, and in the boundless fancies of later tradition. A ^{Queen of Sheba.} chieftainess, a queen from some distant country, was attracted, by the widespread accounts of his wisdom, to come herself in person to put these riddles to him. Her long train of camels lived in the recollection of the Israelites, as bringing gifts of gold, precious stones, and balsam, to her host.² A memorial of her visit was long believed to remain in the balsam gardens of Jericho.³ Like Hiram, she was worsted in the unequal conflict. All her questions were answered, and the magnificence of the court, especially of the state⁴ entrance to the Temple, was such that "there was no more spirit left in her." But it was his "wisdom" chiefly which dwelt in her mind. "Happy are thy wives, happy are these thy servants, who stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom."⁵

So romantic an incident could not but provoke the desire to fill up what the Biblical account leaves unsaid. The legends divide themselves into two classes. Those

¹ Josephus, *c. Apion*, i. 17, 18; in LXX., and Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 6, *Ant.* viii. 5, § 3.

² 1 Kings x. 2; 2 Chr. ix. 1.

³ Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 6, § 6; and the passages cited in Robinson, *Bib. Res.* i. 559.

§ 5. But 2 Chron. ix. 4 (where the word is peculiar), and Ezek. xl. 26, confirm the common view.

⁵ 1 Kings x. 8 (LXX.). See Lecture XXVII.

⁴ 1 Kings x. 5. Or "offerings," as

of Abyssinia, fortified by the Arabic translation, "Queen of the South,"¹ represented her as coming from Meroe. Of this it is some slight confirmation that Josephus calls her Queen of Egypt and Ethiopia,² and that Meroe unquestionably was ruled by queens. This story gives to her the name of Makeda, and represents her as bearing a child to Solomon (Melimelek), from whom the present sovereigns of Abyssinia claim descent,³ and either to the fact or the story are to be ascribed the traditions of Solomon and of Jewish usages that so strongly mark the Abyssinian Church, and it is curious that the most degraded and barbarous of Christian churches should thus claim to be the representative of the highest and most civilized period of the Church of Israel.

The Arab tradition rests, perhaps, on a safer foundation. "Sheba" naturally points to the Arabian Sabæa, as also do the gifts brought, and the probability that she might have heard the rumors of his wisdom through the fleets of Ophir. Her name in this version was Balkis.⁴ Many were the trials of wit recorded. One of the spirits, at the bidding of Solomon's vizier, transported the throne of Balkis to Jerusalem, and Solomon had it altered, in order to conceal its identity. She approached, and it was asked of her, "Is this like thy throne?" She saw through their meaning, and answered, with a union of penetration and courtesy which charmed them all, "It seems to be the same." She, on the other hand, had sent two troops, of boys

¹ Compare Matt. xii. 42.

² *Ant.* viii. 6, § 5. He believes that the Pharaohs came to an end with Solomon's father-in-law, and that she was the Queen Nitocris (Nicaule)

mentioned by Herodotus (*Ant.* viii. 6, § 2).

³ Ludolf, *Æthiop.* ii. 3.

⁴ D'Herbelot, *Balkis*.

dressed like girls, and of girls dressed like boys, nosegays of artificial flowers to be distinguished from real ones by the sight alone, and also a diamond to be threaded, and a goblet to be filled with water, neither from the clouds nor the earth. Solomon detected the boys and girls by their different manner of washing, the difference in the nosegays he discovered by letting the bees in upon them, and he sent a worm which passed a silken thread through the intricate perforations of the diamond, and then as its reward received the mulberry-tree for its future habitation. A huge slave was set to gallop to and fro on a fiery horse; and from the torrents of his perspiration the goblet was filled. He then married her, and although she returned to Arabia he spent in every year three months in her company. On her death, the genii carried her body, by his orders, to Tadmor, where her grave is still concealed beneath the ruins of Palmyra.¹

The effort implied by this strange bringing together of remote characters for one purpose, has given to it alone of the events of Solomon's reign a place in the New Testament. "The Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon."² Nor is this selection unworthy of the general interest of the story. The spirit of this asking of questions and solving of dark riddles is of the very nature of the Socratic wisdom itself. "To ask questions rightly," said Lord Bacon, "is the half of knowledge." "Life without cross-examination is no life at all," said Socrates. And of this stimulating process, of this

¹ Weil's *Legends*, 194-211; Koran, xxvii. 20-45; Lane's *Selections*, 236-241. ² Matt. xii. 42.

eager inquiry, of this cross-examining of our thoughts, bringing new meanings out of old words—Solomon is the first example. When we inquire, when we question, when we are restless in our search after truth, when we seek it from unexpected quarters, we are but following in the steps of the wise King of Judah, and the wise Queen of Sheba.

2. But farther, Solomon was, at least in one great branch, the founder, the only representative, His science. not merely of Hebrew wisdom, but of Hebrew science. As Alexander's conquests had supplied the materials for the first natural history of Greece, so Solomon's commerce did the like for the first natural history of Israel. "He spake of trees," from the highest to the lowest, "from the spreading cedar-tree of Lebanon to the slender caper-plant that springs out of the crevice of the wall. He spake also of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes." We must look at him as the first great naturalist of the world, in the midst of the strange animals—the apes, the peacocks—which he had collected from India; in the garden, among the copious springs of Etham, or in the bed of the deep ravine beneath the wall of his newly erected temple, where, doubtless, was to be seen the transplanted cedar, superseding the humble sycamore of Palestine; ¹ the "paradise" ² of rare plants, gathered from far and near,—“pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron, calamus, and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices.” ³

The Arabian traditions have founded on this characteristic of Solomon the numerous fables of his inter-

¹ 1 Kings x. 27; 2 Chr. ix. 27.

³ Cant. iv. 13, 14.

² Eccl. ii. 5 (Heb.).

course with birds, with whom "he conversed, both on "account of their delicious language, which he knew as "well as his own, as also for the beautiful proverbs, "which are current amongst them." The lapwing was his special favorite. The cock and the hoopoe were his constant attendants. Clouds of birds formed the canopy of his throne and of his litter. The doves were to live in his Temple. They multiplied so rapidly from the stroke of his hand that he could walk to the Temple from the market quarter of the city under cover of their wings.¹ The more prosaic mind of Josephus has rather inclined to see in the Biblical account of Solomon's natural science his tendency to draw parables from every form of vegetable and animal life, — a supposition probably suggested by the appeals to the ant.² But, on one point, the sober Jew and the wild Arab are agreed. Both represent Solomon's science to have extended beyond the limits of the natural world into the regions of magic and demoniacal agency. According to Arabian legends, he ruled the genii with an absolute sway by his signet-ring. At his command they built the Temple and the walls of Tadmor and of Baalbec; on their wings he rode to and fro, breakfasting at Persepolis, dining at Baalbec,³ supping at Jerusalem. Under his throne he buried their magical books.⁴ According to Josephus, incantations for the cure of disorders, exorcisms for casting out demons, said to have been discovered by Solomon, were still used⁵ in Palestine in his own time.

¹ Weil's *Legends*, 172, 173, 186; Lane's *Selections*, 235.

² Prov. vi. 6-8; xxx. 25; Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 2, § 5.

³ Chardin, iii. 135, 143; Weil, 176.

⁴ Weil, 175-213.

⁵ Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 2, § 5. These, or the like of them, were handed on to Christian times, under the names of the key of Solomon, &c. (See Fabricius.)

It is remarkable that of these occult powers there is not the slightest trace in the sacred writings. His magic. They say nothing of his magic. But of his science they tell enough to show us that, in pursuing this great study, we are his true followers; that the geologist, the astronomer, but especially the botanist and the naturalist, may claim him as their first professor. They tell us this, and they tell us no more, in order to impress upon us also, that science is not the object of the Bible,—it is concerned with other and yet higher matters. Lord Bacon, in a striking passage in the “New Atlantis,” represents the governor of the island as speaking to strangers of the treasures of Solomon’s “books” on all plants, and on all things that have life and motion—lost to us, but preserved there. A fond wish, a happy fancy, but not a reality. If the object of Revelation had been to teach us the wonders of the natural creation, to anticipate Linnæus and Cuvier, here was the time, here was the occasion, here were the works on Hebrew science ready to be enrolled at once in the canon of Scripture. But not so. They have passed away. We have the advantage of Solomon’s example, but we have not the advantage, or, it may be, the disadvantage, of his speculations and his discoveries.

3. From his riddles and his science we pass to his His songs. poetry. “His songs were a thousand and five,” or “five thousand.”¹ Of these, again, the larger part must be lost. Amongst the Psalms, only four, the 2d, the 45th, the 72d, and 127th (these two last by their titles, and all, to a certain extent, by their subjects) can claim any direct connection with Solomon himself. Two—the 88th and the 89th—are ascribed to his contemporaries, Heman and Ethan. Asaph, the alleged

¹ 1 Kings iv. 32 (Heb. and LXX.).

author of so many psalms, is, as we have seen, in the Arabian legends, but without any Biblical ground, supposed to be his vizier. Eighteen apocryphal psalms of Solomon's remain, once incorporated in the Psalter, or between the Books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, of which the Hebrew original is lost, but which are preserved to us in a Greek translation. They were probably written after the profanation of the Temple¹ by Antiochus. There is nothing in them which specially attaches them to the history of Solomon, unless it be their plaintive strain, and their lament over his beloved sanctuary.

The real Songs of Solomon were probably of a more secular kind. The well-known book called the "Song of Songs," "Cantica Canticorum," "The Canticles," — although our own Hebrew scholar, Kennicott, supposed it to be of the time of Ezra, — has by the profoundest modern scholars (I need only mention the great name of Ewald) been ascribed to the age, if not to the pen, of Solomon. Into the infinitely various interpretations² of the intention and arrangement of the book, we need not here inquire. From so vexed and obscure a controversy no permanent light can be thrown on the career of Solomon. But for our present purpose, its outward historical imagery and form, as it is the most clear, so it is the most important. The scene is such as could have been laid in Solomon's Court, and in no other period. In form it is the most direct sanction which the sacred writings contain of the dramatic element. We almost start at the word. But it is the name by which it is expressly called by the great

¹ Ewald, iv. 343.

² It may be observed that the allegorical interpretation has not the least support from the New Testament. It is never quoted there (see Ginsburg, *Song of Songs*, Introd. § 5).

Episcopal scholars of the Greek, French, and English Churches, — Gregory Nazianzen, Bossuet, and Lowth, — and of this drama the stage and scenery are formed by the gardens, the luxury, the splendor of Solomon.¹ Nowhere else is the fragrance of spring, the beauty of flowers, the variety of animal life, brought out in a manner more worthy of the great King who entered so keenly into all these things. “The winter is past, “the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the “earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and “the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig- “tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with “the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, “my fair one, and come away.”² We feel as we read that this is our own feeling. It is more than Oriental, — it is the simple, genuine sentiment of delight in nature. Whatever else we may learn from the Song of Solomon, we may at least learn the same fresh and homely lesson that has been impressed upon the Christian world by the new turn given to poetic feeling through our own Wordsworth. We may find it difficult, except in far-fetched allegorical explanations, to discover any directly religious lessons in the Song of Solomon. The name of God never occurs in it. But this ought to be no stumbling-block. Nay, it may be one of the chief providential reasons for its admission into the sacred canon, to show us that a book, in order to be truly sacred, truly divine, need not of necessity have the outward expressions of religion or of theology, — to show us that there is something of itself religious and inspiring in the fervent description of pure natural affection, and of the beautiful sights and sounds of the natural world.

4. The chief manifestation, in writing, of Solomon's

¹ See Lecture XXVII.

² Cant. ii. 11-13.

wisdom was that of "Proverbs," "Parables," or by whatever other name we translate the Hebrew word *Mashal*. The inward spirit of his philosophy (for such it might be called, and was the nearest approach to the Western idea which the Hebrew mind ever attained) consisted in questionings about the ends of life, propounding and answering the difficulties suggested by human experience. Its form was either that of similitudes, or short homely maxims.

"Proverbs," in the modern sense of that word,¹ imply a popular and national reception — they imply, according to the celebrated definition by one of our most eminent statesmen, not only "one man's wit," but "many men's wisdom." This is, however, not the case with Solomon's Proverbs. They are individual, not national. It is because they represent not many men's wisdom, but one man's supereminent wit, that they produced so deep an impression. They were gifts to the people, not the produce of the people. "The words of "the wise are as goads," as barbed points to urge forward to inquiry, to knowledge. This is one aspect. They are also "as nails or stakes driven" hard and home into the ground of the heart, "by the masters of "the assembly, by the shepherds of the people."² Their pointed form is given to them to make them probe and stimulate the heart and memory; they are driven in with all the weight of authority, to give fixedness and firmness to the whole system.

Although "Proverbs" are twice³ mentioned in the time of David, and poems, under the name of "Proverbs," are mentioned as far back as the conquest⁴ of

¹ Archbishop Trench, *On Proverbs*.

³ 1 Sam. x. 12; xxiv. 13.

² Eccles. xii. 11, with the com-

⁴ Numb. xxi. 27.

Palestine, yet, as in the case of the word "Wisdom," the connection of "Proverbs" with Solomon can be traced by the immense multiplication of the word after his time. Two special causes may be noticed as having turned his mind and that of his people in this direction. One is the prevalence of this mode of composition amongst the Arabian tribes with whom he and they now came into contact. The elaborate prophecies of the Mesopotamian Balaam are called by this title.¹ The other is the adoption of this style by Solomon's friend and preceptor Nathan. The apologue of the ewe lamb, though not called a "parable" or "proverb," is the first instance of its application to moral and religious matters, and even in its form exactly resembles one in the Book of Ecclesiastes.²

The extent of this literature was far beyond what has come down to us. "He spake three thousand proverbs."³ But of these, a considerable number are actually preserved in the Book of Proverbs.⁴ The whole book emanates from his spirit. They abound in allusions,—now found for the first time, and precisely applicable to the age of Solomon—to gold and silver and precious stones;⁵ to the duties and power of kings;⁶ to commerce.⁷ In them appears the first idea of fixed education and discipline,⁸ the first description of the

¹ Numb. xxiii. 7, 18, &c. (Heb.).

² Eccles. ix. 13–15.

³ 1 Kings iv. 32.

⁴ They are divided into three classes. (1.) The Proverbs of Solomon, i. — xxiv. (2.) The Proverbs of Solomon, copied out by order of Hezekiah, xxv. — xxix. (3.) The Prophecies of Agur and Lemuel, xxx. xxxi.

⁵ Prov. i. 9; iii. 14, 15; viii. 10, 11; x. 20; xvi. 16; xvii. 3; xx. 15; xxii. 1; xxv. 4, 12; xxvii. 21; xxxi. 10.

⁶ Ibid. xiv. 28; xvi. 10–15; xix. 12; xx. 26; xxi. 1; xxv. 2, 3, 5, 6, 7; xxx. 31; xxxi. 4.

⁷ Ibid. vii. 16, 17; xxxi. 14, 21–24.

⁸ Ibid. i. 3, 4; iii. 1; iv. 4; vii. 1–3; x. 13; xxvi. 3.

diversities of human character.¹ In them the instincts of the animal creation are first made to give lessons to men.² Here also, as already remarked, we see the specimens of those riddles which delighted that age.

The Book of Proverbs is not on a level with the Prophets or the Psalms. It approaches human things and things divine from quite another side. It has even something of a worldly, prudential look, unlike the rest of the Bible. But this is the very reason why its recognition as a Sacred Book is so useful. It is the philosophy of practical life. It is the sign to us that the Bible does not despise common sense and discretion. It impresses upon us, in the most forcible manner, the value of intelligence and prudence, and of a good education. The whole strength of the Hebrew language, and of the sacred authority of the book, is thrown upon these homely truths. It deals too in that refined, discriminating, careful view of the finer shades of human character, so often overlooked by theologians, but so necessary to any true estimate of human life. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and the stranger does not intermeddle with its joy." How much is there, in that single sentence, of consolation, of love, of forethought! And, above all, it insists over and over again, upon the doctrine, that goodness is "*wisdom*," and that wickedness and vice are "*folly*." There may be many other views of virtue and vice, of holiness and sin, higher and better than this. But there will be always some in the world who will need to remember that a good man is not only religious and just, but wise; and that a bad man is not only wicked and sinful, but a miserable, contemptible fool.

¹ Prov. vi. 12, 13; x. 20; xi. 15, 26; xii. 27; xiii. 11; xiv. 3; xv. 18; xvi. 18; xviii. 4; xxv. 20.

² Prov. vi. 6; xxx. 24-28.

From the Jewish philosophy of Solomon as embodied in the Proverbs, flowed a stream of writings and ideas which ceased only with the destruction of the nation.

Of these, perhaps, the most remarkable is the The Book of Job. Book of Job. Whether it were written years or centuries afterwards, whether we regard its author as an Idumæan or an Israelite, its derivation from the age of Solomon is equally evident. Nothing but the wide contact of that age with the Gentile world could, humanly speaking, have admitted either a subject or a scene so remote from Jewish thought and customs, as that of Job. And, again, the special locality of the story, Edom, agrees with the peculiar atmosphere of the "wisdom" of Solomon. Job, the Edomite chief, was the greatest of "the children of the East,"¹ with whose wisdom that of Solomon is expressly compared.² The Edomite The-man, whence came Eliphaz, was celebrated for its "wisdom."³ The whole book is one grand "proverb" or "parable." It is a proof that the mode of instructing by fiction — the gift of reproducing a past age in order to give lessons to the present — is not, as we sometimes think, a peculiarly modern idea. The definition of "Wisdom" is given, with a particularity worthy of the Proverbs.⁴ The likeness to the Proverbs of Agur is almost verbal. The allusions to the horse, the peacock, the crocodile, and the hippopotamus, are such as in Palestine could hardly have been made till after the formation of Solomon's collections. The knowledge of Egypt and Arabia is what could only have been acquired after the diffusion of Solomon's commerce. The ques-

¹ Job i. 3.

² 1 Kings iv. 30.

³ Job. xv. 1, 10, 18, 19; Jer. xlix.

7; Obadiah 8, 9; Baruch iii. 22.

The whole of this argument is powerfully stated in Rénan, *Livre de Job*, Pref. p. xxvii.

⁴ Job xxviii. 20–28.

tions discussed are the same as those which agitate the mind of Solomon, but descending deeper and deeper into the difficulties of the world. The whole book is a discussion of that great problem of human life which appears in Ecclesiastes and in the Book of Psalms, — What is the intention of Divine Providence in allowing the good to suffer? The greatness and the calamities of Job are given in the most lively forms. The three aged friends are the “liars for God,” the dogged defenders of the traditional popular belief. Elihu is the new wisdom of the rising world, that, like the Grecian Chorus, with the sanction of the Almighty, sets at naught the subtle prejudices of the older generation. The scanty faith of the Patriarch comes out from the trial triumphant. It is the Prometheus, the Faust, as it has been well called, of the most complete age of Jewish civilization.

The Book of Ecclesiastes, which, in its style of mingled precept and apologue, still retains so much of the framework of the Proverbs that Symmachus, in his Greek translation, calls it “the Speaker of Proverbs,” must be reserved for the close of Solomon’s reign. But the line of sacred literature did not end with Ecclesiastes. The Septuagint and Vulgate add two more to complete what are called the five “*Libri Sapientiales*.” Of these the first is the one book, expressly called by the name which properly belongs to them all, “The Wisdom of Solomon.” The traditions of exact authorship, which had begun to fluctuate in Ecclesiastes, waver still more in the Book of Wisdom. Clement of Alexandria, Cyril, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius, and Epiphanius believed that it was written by the great King whose name it bears. All critics now are of opinion that it was the work of an Alexandrian Jew. But it is one link more in the chain

The Book
of Wisdom.

by which the influence of Solomon communicated itself to succeeding ages. As the undoubted "Wisdom," or Proverbs of Solomon, formed the first expression of the contact of Jewish religion with the philosophy of Egypt and Arabia, so the apocryphal "Wisdom of Solomon" is the first expression of the contact of Jewish religion with the Gentile philosophy of Greece. Still the apologue and the warning to kings keeps up the old strain; still the old "Wisdom" makes her voice to be heard; and out of the worldly prudence of Solomon springs, for the first time, in distinct terms, "the hope full of immortality."¹

One further step remains. "The wisdom of Joshua, Book of Ecclesiasticus. "the son of Sirach," through its Latin title known as "Ecclesiasticus," is a still more direct imitation of the works of Solomon, — according to St. Jerome, not merely of the Proverbs, but of the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles all in one. We might now seem to have reached the verge to which "the Wisdom of Solomon" extended. But it is just at this moment that it strikes out in two new lines, each of the utmost importance in the history of the chosen people — each, by a continuous process, carried back to Solomon himself.

The first of these came directly from that contact with the Greek philosophy, of which the two apocryphal books are the earliest outward expression.

The exaltation and the personification of "Wisdom" The Doctrine of Wisdom. lent itself to those abstract speculations which drew out the different ideas wrapt up in the Divine Essence. "Sophia," or "Wisdom," became the feminine, as "Logos," or "Reason," was the masculine, representation of the doctrine of the Divine Intelligence

¹ Wisdom i. 1; vi. 1, 9; iii. 1-4; v. 1-5, &c. &c.

communicating itself to the mind of man. Accordingly, when, on Christ's appearance, the stores of the Greek language were ransacked to furnish expressions adequate to the occasion, the word "Wisdom," σοφία, was called forth to do service for the last time, in the Jewish history, on the grandest scale. Twice, in the New Testament itself, the term is actually applied.¹ The next generation of Christian theologians found, in the pathetic expostulations of Wisdom, and the descriptions of her eternal greatness, the fittest exponents of the words and nature of Christ; and in the Eastern Church, the name has been perpetuated forever in the cathedral of its greatest see. "Santa Sophia" is the christianization and divinization of the word which was bequeathed to the Church by Solomon.

The other is a still more direct connection. Not only was Christ the subject in which the name of The Wisdom of Solomon found its last and highest application, but His teaching was the last and highest example of the thing itself. If we look back to the older Scriptures for the models on which, in form at least, our Lord's discourses are framed, it is, for the most part, not the Psalms, nor the Prophecies, nor the Histories, but the works of Solomon. Not only do the short moral and religious aphorisms resemble in general form the precepts of the Proverbs and of Ecclesiasticus, but the very name by which the greater part of His teaching is called is the same as that of the teaching of Solomon. He spoke in "parables" or "proverbs." The two Greek words² are used promiscuously in the Evangelical narratives, and are in fact representatives of one and the same Hebrew word. It is, we might say, an accident that the Proverbs of Solomon are not

¹ Luke vii. 35; xi. 49.

² Παραβολή and παροιμία.

called the "Parables," and that the teachings of the New Testament are called the "Parables," and not the "Proverbs," of the Gospels. The illustrations from natural objects, the selection of the homelier instead of the grander of these, are not derived from the Prophets, or from the Psalmists, but from the wise Naturalist, "who spake of trees, and beasts, and fowls, and creeping things, and fishes," "of the singing-birds, of the budding fig-tree, of the fragrant vine."¹ The teaching of Solomon is the sanctification of common sense in the Old Testament, and to that sanctification the final seal is set by the adoption of the same style and thought in the New Testament by Him who, with His Apostles,² taught in "Solomon's porch," and expressly compared His wisdom to the wisdom which gathered the nations round Solomon of old.³

From this, the highest honor ever rendered to Solomon, we must pass, before completing the cycle of his wisdom, to the sad story of his decline. The Arabian traditions relate that in the staff on which he leaned, and which supported him long after his death, there was a worm, which was secretly gnawing it asunder. The legend is an apt emblem of the dark end of Solomon's reign. As the record of his grandeur contains a recognition of the interest and value of secular magnificence and wisdom, so the record of his decline and fall contains the most striking witness to the instability of all power that is divorced from moral and religious principle. As Bacon is, in English history,

"The wisest, greatest, meanest of mankind,"

¹ 1 Kings iv. 33; Cant. i. 12, 13; vi. 11; vii. 12, 13, &c. Comp. *Sinai and Palestine*, Chap. XIII.

² John x. 23; Acts iii. 11; v. 12.

³ Matt. xii. 42; Luke xi. 31.

so is Solomon in Jewish and in sacred history. Every part of his splendor had its dark side, and those dark shades have now to be brought out.

There is a bold expression of Schiller, that the Fall was a giant stride in the history of the human race. A reverse of this saying may be applied to the giant stride which Jewish civilization made in the reign of Solomon. It brought with it the fall of the Jewish nation. The commercial intercourse with foreign nations, the assimilation of the Israelite monarchy to the corresponding institutions of the surrounding kingdoms, though it was, as we have seen, indispensable to certain elements of the church and state of Judea, yet was fraught with danger to a people whose chief safeguard had hitherto been their exclusiveness, and whose highest mission was to keep their faith and manners distinct from the contagion of the world around them. It is not for us to say that this danger was inevitable. The mere fact of the wide extension of the Christian Church and Religion — Jewish, Semitic, Palestinian, in their origin — shows that, under certain conditions, the breadth and length of a Religion is as essential as its depth and elevation. But the time was not yet come. The gigantic experiment of Solomon, though partially and prospectively successful, yet in greater part and for the moment failed. Neither he nor his country were equal to the magnitude of the occasion. As he is the representative of the splendors of the monarchy, so is he also the type and cause of its ruin.

Four main causes of corruption are indicated Its causes. in the sacred narrative.

1. Of all the institutions of an Oriental monarchy, the most characteristic and the most fatal is polygamy. It is not on Solomon, but on Polygamy.

David, that the heavy responsibility rests, of having first introduced polygamy on an extended scale into the court of Israel. But Solomon carried it out to a degree unparalleled before or since, and his wider intercourse with foreign nations gave him a wider field for selection. The chief Queen, no doubt, was the Egyptian Princess. But she was surrounded by a vast array of inferior wives and concubines, all of them, as far as appears, of foreign extraction; from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Phœnicia, and the old Canaanitish races.¹ Such a system must have completely destroyed the character of the royal family, and brought with it the inevitable evils of the Oriental seraglio.

It may be that the direct demoralization of the nation was not equal in proportion to that of the court. The seraglio is considered a royal privilege, and the mass of an Eastern population is always monogamist. But the general loosening of the moral and intellectual character by licentiousness is described by Solomon in the Book of Proverbs in terms which assume a mournful interest when viewed in their exemplification in the life of their author. The dangers that haunted the streets of Jerusalem, the disastrous consequences of revelry and debauchery, seem to be the description of a modern Western capital, rather than of an Oriental city. But, if the most recent expositions of the Canticles be correct, that book contains a picture both of the peril which the Jewish morality must have en-

¹ The number of the whole harem is stated in 1 Kings xi. 3, at the almost incredible amount of 700 wives and 300 concubines. This number has been attempted to be reduced from 700 to 70, and from 300 to 80; which would be confirmed by the actual and relative numbers given in Cant. vi. 8,—60 wives and 80 concubines. Some of them may have been for state. Darius Codomannus took 360 concubines to battle (Curt. iii. 3, 24). Rehoboam had only 18 queens and 60 (Josephus, 30) concubines, 2 Chr. xi. 21. See Rosenmüller, *A. und N. Morgenl.* iii. 181.

countered, and also of its pure and successful resistance. The maid of Shunem is courted by Solomon, but courted in vain. She remains faithful to her true lover, and in their passionate expressions of affection, and in their mutual alarms for each other's safety, lies the lasting¹ interest and instruction of the story.

2. The most direct proof of the effect of these foreign influences over Solomon was in the authorized establishment of idolatrous worship. Polytheism.

This was in part, we may suppose, a system of toleration, necessarily arising out of the entanglement of Palestine with other countries. And the narrative implies that it was not Solomon himself who indulged in these foreign rites, so much as his wives and concubines under his sanction or permission. Still, the mere fact of the rise of idolatrous altars, not merely, as may have been the case before, in remote corners of the Holy Land, but in the very sight and neighborhood of the Holy City and Holy Place, must have exercised a wide influence over the whole country. The "daughter of Pharaoh" either conformed to the national religion, or at any rate required no Egyptian sanctuary. But on the southern heights of Olivet, looking towards the royal gardens, were three sanctuaries, on three distinct eminences, consecrated respectively to Astarte, the goddess of Phœnicia, to Chemosh, the war-god of Moab, and to Milcom (or Molech), the divine "king" of Ammon.² The licentious and cruel rites with which these divinities were worshipped gave a name of infamy to the whole mountain. In part, or in whole, it received from these shrines the name of "the Mount of Offence," which it retained, together with the more innocent name of

¹ See Rénan, *Cantique des Cantiques*; Ginsburg on the Canticles.

² 1 Kings xi 5, 7; 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

“Olivet,” till the Christian era, when the darker name was confined to the southernmost of the four heights of which that mountain is composed. The statues and shrines remained, till they were destroyed by Josiah.

3. Along with this depravation of morals and religion followed, not unnaturally, a depravation of that just and wise policy of government which had won for Solomon the admiration and love of his subjects. Little is said, but much is implied, of the oppressive burdens which, in Solomon’s later years, extended from his Canaanite subjects to the free Israelite population. His enormous expenses had obliged him, towards the end of his reign, even to part with a portion of territory, in discharge of his obligations to the King of Tyre. Apparently, it was at this time that the twelve “officers”¹ were appointed, as over foreign countries, to collect taxes from the various districts, like the Landvogts of Austria or the Harmosts of Lacedæmonia, in their foreign dependencies. The aged Adoniram had become so unpopular that his life was only preserved by the great prestige of Solomon’s name. The aged counsellors who stood round him were dismayed, the rising generation of subjects who grew up round him were exasperated, and the insolent young courtiers who gathered round his son were encouraged by seeing “the heavy yoke,” “the grievous service,” “the chastisement of whips,” with which Solomon tried to press down the spirit and independence of his people.² The government of the wise King was rapidly becoming as odious to the Israelites as that of the race of Tarquin,³ in spite of all their splendid works, to the patricians of Rome. Mutterings of the coming storm were already

¹ Since two of them were the King’s sons-in-law.

² I Kings xii. 4, 7, 11, 14.

³ See Arnold’s *Rome*, i. 89.

heard, both abroad and at home. The chiefs of Edom, and of Syria, again raised their heads in revolt,¹ and now for the first time appeared, although his overt acts are implied rather than stated, the founder of the future rival dynasty, Jeroboam.

4. This last event introduces us to the darkest of the clouds which rested on the declining fortunes of Solomon. From whatever cause, the one Absence of Prophets. institution of the Jewish commonwealth which received no visible growth or encouragement during Solomon's reign, was the Prophetical order. Of Nathan, his Prophet-teacher, we hear nothing after his inauguration, except that the Prophet's two sons, Azariah and Zabud, held, as we have seen, distinguished offices in the court, and that Solomon's reign was partially recorded by Nathan. The only Prophet who takes an active part, and that quite in the close of the reign, is Ahijah of Shiloh.² It is not clear whether it was through his mouth in the first instance, or through a dream, as in the earlier periods of Solomon's life, that the Divine intimation was conveyed, announcing the disruption of his kingdom and the fall of his house. But in either case, it was a significant token of the approaching calamity, that the Prophet once more, as in the time of Saul, stood opposed to the King. This is all that is told us in the historical books of Solomon's last acts. "He was buried" in the royal sepulchre with his father, David.³

In one sense, the whole subsequent history of the disruption and of the divided kingdom is a con- The end of Solomon. tinuation of the dark shadow which fell over

¹ 1 Kings xi. 14-25.

² Ibid. xi. 29.

³ According to 1 Kings xi. 42, in

the 40th, according to Josephus (*Ant.* viii. 7, § 8), in the 80th, year of his

the last years of Solomon. But we return to the great King himself, and would fain ask what was his own final state amidst the decay of the present, and the forebodings of the future. Theologians used to vex themselves with the question, whether Solomon was amongst the saved or the lost. Irenæus, Hilary, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose, and Jerome, lean to the milder view. The severer is adopted by Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine, and Gregory the Great. So frequently was the question discussed, and so equally balanced did it seem, that in the series of frescos on the walls of the Campo Santo at Pisa, Solomon is represented in the resurrection at the last day as looking ambiguously to the right and to the left, not knowing on which side his lot will be cast.

It is far more profitable to take Solomon, as the Bible represents him to us, in his mingled good and evil. He is the chief example in Sacred History of what meets us often in common history,—the union of genius and crime. The record of his career sanctions our use of the intellectual power even of the weakest or the wickedest of mankind. As Solomon's fall is not overlooked in consideration of his power and glory, so neither because he fell does he cease to be called the wisest of men, nor is his wisdom shut out from the Sacred Volume. It is a striking instance of the law that good, once done, can never be entirely undone, wisdom, once spoken, can never be entirely recalled. The sensual and cruel worship which Solomon established on the hills of Palestine has passed away—even the dissolution of his empire has but little intrinsic importance for us. But the wise words which he wrote, in spite of his later failings, still continue, and have given birth, as we have seen, to the like wis-

dom, age after age. Fear not to use the learning and the genius of heathens, of heretics, nay, must we not even say of infidels, and of profligates? Fear not, for the Scriptures still contain, and the Church still reads, the Proverbs of the apostate King, the words of one who sanctioned, if he did not adopt, some of the worst idolatries that have polluted the earth.

But there is a more precise and peculiar lesson to be derived from the history which tells how the promise of youth was overcast by the evil passions of manhood, or the worldliness of age; how the wisdom of Solomon was turned into folly; his justice into tyranny; his prosperity into misery and ruin. Out of that darkness, itself filled with warning, one voice comes to us, with doubtful and hesitating accents, but still the nearest approach or echo that we can now attain to the voice of Solomon himself.

The Book of Proverbs is, in the Canon of the Old Testament, followed by the book called, in the Greek, *Ecclesiastes*, in the Hebrew, *Koheleth*, in the English, the "Preacher." The "Preacher" represented in it is no doubt Solomon. But the writer was, in some Jewish traditions, supposed to be Isaiah, in some Hezekiah, and in the Christian Church, since the time of Grotius, many distinguished scholars¹ have supposed, from the character of the language, compared with that of the Proverbs, and from the general allusions, that it must be of a later date still. We have a splendid sanction of the same kind of personification in the Book of Wisdom. But, however this may be, there can be no doubt that Ecclesiastes embodies the sentiments which were believed to have proceeded

The Book
of Ecclesi-
astes.

¹ See Ginsburg's excellent history of the literature of the subject in his Commentary on Ecclesiastes.

from Solomon at the close of his life, and therefore must be taken as the Hebrew, Scriptural, representation of his last lessons to the world.

What those lessons were, have, by reason of the obscurity of the style, been matters of considerable doubt. Many, both Jewish and Christian, of former times, have been so strongly impressed by the gloom, the despair, the supposed Epicureanism which pervades the book, as to wish to reject it altogether from the canon of Scripture. The Jewish doctors hesitated to receive it.¹ The most renowned "interpreter" of the ancient Eastern Church rejected it in the fifth century. Abulfaragius, in the fourteenth century, doubtless drew from this book his mournful representation of Solomon as a disciple of the sect of the sceptical Empedocles. Even in England, the doubters and scoffers amongst our half-educated mechanics often take refuge under the authority of Solomon, and make the Book of Ecclesiastes alternately the sanction of their own unbelief, and a ground of attack against the general faith of the Bible.

But a more careful insight will supply us with a true answer to these difficulties, and make us feel both the value of Ecclesiastes as a part of Scripture, and also its close connection with the character and career of the great King of Israel.

As the Book of Job is couched in the form of a dramatic argument between the Patriarch and his friends, as the Song of Songs is a dramatic dialogue between the Lover and the Beloved One, so the Book of Ecclesiastes is a drama of a still more tragic kind. It is an interchange of voices, higher and lower,

¹ Jerome, *Comm.* on xii. 13; Rabbi *pol.* cap. x. 45; Preston's *Ecclesiastes*, Jehuda in Spinosa, *Tract. Theologico-* 13, 74.

mournful and joyful, within a single human soul. It is like the struggle between the two principles in the Epistle to the Romans. It is like the question and answer of the "Two Voices" of our modern poet. It is like the perpetual strophe and antistrophe of Pascal's *Pensées*. But it is more complicated, more entangled, than any of these, in proportion as the circumstances from which it grows are more perplexing, as the character which it represents is vaster, and grander, and more distracted. Every speculation and thought of the human heart is heard, and expressed, and recognized in turn. The conflicts which in other parts of the Bible are confined to a single verse or a single chapter, are here expanded to a whole book.

Listen, not with scoffing or disbelief, but with reverence and sympathy, to its darker strains. No history in the Bible is more disappointing than the close of the life of Solomon. No book in the Bible is sadder than the Book of Ecclesiastes. The nearest approach to it in the Sacred writings is to be found in two of the Psalms, the 88th and 89th, ascribed by their titles to two of Solomon's greatest contemporaries: Heman and Ethan. Like Ecclesiastes, they bear marks of being themselves of later date, put into the mouths of those two famous oracles of ancient wisdom. Like it, too, they present the profound melancholy of human experience, lit up here and there with a gleam of brighter hope.¹ In Ecclesiastes, the first prevailing cry is that of weariness and despair. "Vanity of vanities, all is
"vanity. . . . I looked on all that my hands had
"wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do :
"and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit. . . .
"In much wisdom is much grief. . . . He that increaseth

¹ Comp. especially Ps. lxxxviii. 5, 6, 12, 18, lxxxix. 46-50.

“knowledge increaseth sorrow. Therefore I hated life, “because the work that is wrought under the sun is “grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of “spirit.”¹ Deep as is the melancholy which fills the soul of the Preacher, as he is thus described in the contemplation of his own life, it is deeper still as he looks round on the wide world which through him was first opened to the eyes of Israel. “I returned, and considered the oppressions that were done under the “sun: and beheld the tears of such as were oppressed, “and they had no comforter. . . . Wherefore I praised “the dead that were already dead more than the living “which are yet alive. Yea, better than both they is “he which hath not been. . . . That which befalleth “the sons of men befalleth beasts—as the one dieth, “so dieth the other; yea, they have one breath; so “that a man hath no preëminence above a beast, for “all is vanity. . . . All things come alike to all: there “is one event to the righteous and to the wicked . . . “to the clean and to the unclean. . . . As is the good, “so is the sinner. . . . Time and chance happeneth to “them all.”² This cry is indeed full of doubt, and despair, and perplexity; it is such as we often hear from the melancholy, sceptical, inquiring spirits of our own age; such as we often refuse to hear, and regard as unworthy even a good man’s thought or care. But the admission of such a cry into the Book of Ecclesiastes shows that it is not beneath the notice of the Bible, not beneath the notice of God. It is not the voice of abstract right, or truth, or religion, but it is the bitter, the agonized, and in this sense the most true and characteristic, utterance, of one who has known all things, enjoyed all things, been admired by all men, has

¹ Eccl. i. 2, 18; ii. 11, 17.

² Eccl. iv. 1-3; iii. 19; ix. 2, 11.

seen through all the littleness and worthlessness of all these things in themselves, and yet not been able to grasp that which alone could give them an enduring value, or compensate for their absence. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Doubt can find a place even in the sacred books; despair even in the heart of inspired wisdom.

But along with this unbelieving cynical distress, are other voices gradually getting the better. First there is the profound experience of human life, expressing itself in strains of wisdom so refined, so serious, as to belong rather to a modern age, than to that when the book was composed. "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace."¹ How many of the worst controversies and scandals which have beset the history of the Church would have been spared, if this doctrine of the wise man had been remembered, that there is a proportion in all things; that what is right at one time is wrong at another; that what is wisdom in one age is folly in another!

But there are strains of a still higher mood. Amidst the darkest gloom, there come, from time to time, counsels from an entirely opposite quarter. Cheerfulness, resignation, the call to do our duty, however dreary and

¹ Eccl. iii. 1-8.

uncertain the future—the more cheerfully and actively, as the future is more dreary and more uncertain: “Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God *now* accepteth thy works. . . . Live joyfully with the wife that thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity; for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labors which thou takest under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”¹ And the tone of the book, as it draws to the end, becomes at once more harmonious with itself and more serious. “Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth” . . . (this still is to continue), “but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee unto judgment. Remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh . . . yet remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.”² There is a deep solemnity, but there is no murmur, in the description which follows of the end which awaits us all. “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.”³

But even this is not the end. There is a yet simpler and nobler summary of the wide and varied experience of the manifold forms of human life, as represented in the greatness and the fall of Solomon. It is not “vanity of vanities,” it is not “rejoice and be merry,” it is not even “wisdom and knowledge, and many proverbs, and the words of the wise, even words of truth.” “Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion

¹ Eccl. ix. 7-10.

² Ibid. xi. 9, 10; xii. 1.

³ Ibid. xii. 7.

“of the whole matter.” For all students of ecclesiastical history, for all students of theology, for all who are about to be religious teachers of others, for all who are entangled in the controversies of the present, there are no better words to be remembered than these, viewed in their original and immediate application. They are the true answer to all perplexities respecting Ecclesiastes and Solomon; they are no less the true answer to all perplexities about human life itself. “Fear God, and “keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty “of man. For God shall bring every work into judg- “ment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or “whether it be evil.”¹

¹ Eccl. xii. 12, 13, 14.

THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.



- XXIX. THE HOUSE OF JEROBOAM. — AHIJAH AND IDDO.
- XXX. THE HOUSE OF OMRI. — AHAB AND ELIJAH.
- XXXI. THE HOUSE OF OMRI. — ELISHA.
- XXXII. THE HOUSE OF OMRI. — JEHU.
- XXXIII. THE HOUSE OF JEHU. — JEROBOAM II. AND JONAH.
- XXXIV. THE FALL OF SAMARIA. — AMOS AND HOSEA.

THE AUTHORITIES ARE,

- I. 1. The "Chronicles, or State Papers, of the Kings of Israel," mentioned especially in the cases of Jeroboam (1 Kings xiv. 19), Nadab (xv. 31), Elah (xvi. 1 4), Omri (xvi. 27), Ahab (xxii. 39), Jehu (2 Kings x. 34), Jehoahaz (xiii. 8), Joash (xiii. 12; xiv. 15), Jeroboam II. (xiv. 28), Zachariah (xv. 11), Pekah (xv. 31), Shallum (xv. 15), Menahem (xv. 21), Pekahiah (xv. 26).
2. The "Book of the Kings of Israel," 2 Chr. xx. 34.
3. The "Visions of Iddo against Jeroboam" (2 Chr. ix. 29); the "Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite" (ibid.); the "Transactions (lit. words) of Shemaiah the Prophet and Iddo the Seer" (xii. 15); the "Story (*Midrash*) of Iddo" (xiii. 22); and of Jehu the son of Hanani (xx. 34, probably 1 Kings xxii.); a prophecy of Jonah (2 Kings xiv. 25).
- II. The Prophetical book, originally one book (Jerome, *Prolog. galeatus*), though now divided into two, called "Kings" (Hebrew) and "Kingdoms" (LXX.), or called after its first words, "And King David," grecized into *Ouammelech David* (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 25); with a few additions from the Book of Chronicles.
 1. 1 Kings xii. 1—xiv. 20; 2 Chr. x. 1—xi. 17; xiii. 1—20 (Jeroboam); 1 Kings xv. 25—xvi. 20 (Baasha and Zimri).
 2. 1 Kings xvi. 21—2 Kings viii. 15; 2 Chr. xviii.; xxii. 6—12 (House of Omri).
 3. 2 Kings ix. 1—x. 36; xiii. 1—25; xiv. 8—16, 23—29; xv. 8—12 (House of Jehu).
 4. 2 Kings xv. 13—26, 27—31; xvii. 1—23; 2 Chr. xxviii. 6—15 (Close of the Monarchy).
- III. Illustrations from Zechariah ix. 1—xi. 17; Hosea; Amos; Nahum; Isaiah vii. 1—ix. 21; xv., xvi., xxviii.; Micah i. 5—9; Jonah; Psalms lxxvii. (see verse 15), lxxx. (verses 1, 2), lxxxi. (verse 5), lxxxiii. (verse 4 ?), lxxxv. (verse 1 ?).
- IV. Illustrations from the Assyrian Inscriptions. These are collected in Rawlinson's *Bampton Lectures* (Lect. iv.); and *Five Great Monarchies*, chaps. vii., viii., ix.
- V. Jewish traditions in Josephus (*Ant.* viii. 8—ix. 14), Jerome (*Quæst. Hebraicæ*), and the *Seder Olam*.

LECTURE XXIX.

THE HOUSE OF JEROBOAM. — AHIJAH AND IDDO.

THE period of the Jewish monarchy on which we now enter is broken into two portions ; the first consisting of the three centuries during which the northern kingdom existed, and occupied the most prominent position ; the second, of the remaining century, during which the Kingdom of Judah was left alone. Partly from this natural division of time, chiefly because there is a real unity and distinctness of design in the history of each of the two kingdoms, I propose to keep them apart from each other.

The name by which the northern kingdom was called carries with it a fulness of meaning which we sometimes overlook. It was the Kingdom of The Kingdom of Israel. "Israel." It must have appeared at the time, and it was, to a great degree, the kingdom of the whole nation. It was a national watchword, and not the war-cry of a single tribe, which led the revolt :

"What portion have we in David?

Neither have we inheritance with the son of Jesse :

To your tents, O *Israel* :

See to thine own house, David."

As after the death of Saul, Abner "took Ishbosheth . . . and made him king . . . over *all* Israel," while "the men of Judah . . . anointed David" Its national character. "king over the house of Judah,"¹ so "it came to pass

¹ 2 Sam. ii. 8, 9, 4.

“that *all* Israel . . . made Jeroboam king over *all* Israel; there was none that followed the house of David, “but the tribe of Judah only.”¹ From the extreme north down to the very confines of the fastnesses of Judea; from the Mediterranean sea to the Assyrian desert, and even to the Euphrates, the Kingdom of Israel still reached. It included not only the territory which centred round Ephraim, but reached far away north and south: to the distant Naphtali beyond the sources of the Jordan; to the tribes beyond the Jordan; through the whole valley of the Jordan down to its exit into the Dead Sea; to the corner² of Dan on the sea-coast. The frontier tribes of Simeon and of Benjamin, which were almost inclosed within the dominion of Judah, gave divided allegiance to both kingdoms. It embraced the chief seats of secular and of religious greatness, Bethel, Shechem, Mahanaim, Jericho, Gilgal, at times even Beersheba.³ Only the patriarchal burial-place of Hebron and the Davidic capital of Jerusalem were beyond its reach. With the neighboring state of Phœnicia, and with its maritime neighbors of the Mediterranean, through Acre, and through Jaffa, Israel, and not Judah, was brought into connection. Even though Damascus for a time broke loose, yet the commerce of Palmyra and Baalbec must have continued. Moab and Ammon, so far as they were held in check at all, were dependent on Israel, not on Judah.

The Kingdom of Israel was the National Kingdom, and the Church of Israel was the National Church. In the later Prophetical books written during the decline of the northern kingdom, when the

¹ 1 Kings xii. 20.

³ Amos v. 5; viii. 14; on the other

² Zorah belonged to Judah (2 hand, 1 Kings xix. 3. Chr. xi. 10).

trans-Jordanic tribes were carried off, it was known by the name of its chief tribe, Ephraim,¹ and of its chief city, Samaria. But in the Historical books it is always "Israel," and in the earlier Prophetical books it is usually "Israel,"² or "the children of Israel," or else bears the still more significant names of "Jacob," "Isaac," and "Joseph."³ The original idea of the disruption was that it was a Divine dispensation. "The thing was from the LORD."⁴ It was as much part of the Divine economy of the national destinies as the erection of the monarchy itself, or as the substitution of the House of David for the House of Saul. "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, *I* will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee. . . . I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel."⁵ "I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my People Israel, and rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee."⁶ So spoke the two chief prophets of the period, Shemaiah and Ahijah. They were the supports of the new dynasty of Jeroboam, as Samuel had been of the new dynasty of David. Jeroboam seemed to them to furnish the promise of a future David; and, although this was not fulfilled, yet the Prophetic hopes were still recruited from the ranks of Israel. Dynasty after dynasty was raised up with the Prophetic sanction. Of Baasha, no less than of Jero-

¹ Ewald, iii. 412. The name occurs many times in Hosea and Zechariah; in three passages in Isaiah (vii. 2, xi. 13, xxviii. 1, 3); and in one Psalm (lxxviii. 9).

² "Israel" is for the first time used

for Judah, after the destruction of Samaria, Zech. xii. 1.

³ Amos iii. 13; vi. 8; vii. 2, 5, 9, 16; Hosea xii. 2; Amos vi. 6.

⁴ 1 Kings xii. 15, 24.

⁵ Ibid. xi. 31-37.

⁶ Ibid. xiv. 7, 8.

boam and of David, it was said "*the Lord* exalted him "out of the dust, and made him prince over His people "Israel."¹ Over the head of Jehu, as over the head of Saul, of David, and of Solomon, was poured the sacred oil of consecration, with the words, "Thus saith "the Lord God of Israel, Behold *I* have anointed thee "to be king over the people of the LORD, even over "Israel."² There is no indication even amidst the worst crimes of the rulers of Israel, of a desire to return to the dominion of Judah, or to take a prince from the House of David. The Prophetical activity of the time, amidst whatever discouragements, is to be found in the kingdom not of Judah, but of Israel. The schools of the Prophets had been originally, and still continued to be, not at Jerusalem, but at Ramah, at Bethel, at Gilgal, — all situated within the northern state. They live there with their wives and children.³ They are counted by fifty, by hundred, by five hundred at a time. For the two centuries which followed the disruption there are (if we except Joel as of doubtful date) only two who belong exclusively to Judah, namely, Hanani⁴ the seer, and Eliezer of Mareshah.⁵ Of the others, who by birth or dwelling-place might be reckoned to Judah, as Iddo the seer, Amos, the elder Zechariah, and Jehu the son of Hanani, their ministrations, as far as we know, are almost exclusively directed to Israel. Micaiah the son of Imlah, Jonah, and Hosea, belong entirely to the northern kingdom. Elijah and Elisha grow up, speak, teach, live, and pass away, entirely in the Church of Israel. Not a message of blessing or warning, if we except the one short address of Elisha to Jehoshaphat,⁶

¹ 1 Kings xvi. 2.

² 2 Kings ix. 6, 7.

³ Ibid. iv. 1, 38.

⁴ 2 Chr. xvi. 7.

⁵ Ibid. xx. 37.

⁶ 2 Kings iii. 14.

and the one short letter of Elijah to Jehoram,¹ reaches the Kings of Judah. Nazarites, too, naturally fostered by the example of Elijah, were an established institution of Israel.² A like institution, a prolongation of the primitive Bedouin life into the civilization of the monarchy, was that of the Rechabites.³ The Jordan valley, or the glades of Carmel, the natural resort of devout seclusion, attracted these and other companies of religious men, who lived, like John the Baptist, or the Essenes, amongst the caves or leafy thickets of both these regions. It is only in the last dissolution of the northern kingdom that the seat of Prophecy is transferred from the ancient schools of the north to Judah and Jerusalem.

There was nothing in the external state of the kingdom of Israel to contradict this assumption of superiority over the kingdom of Judah. Ex-^{Its splendor.}cept at intervals, and with the standing modifications introduced by Jeroboam, the ancient worship continued. The three great festivals, the immense variety of sacrifices, the new moons and the sabbaths were assiduously celebrated. The new Temple was attended by King and Priest, and resounded with Psalms of its own, accompanied by the peculiar musical instruments introduced by David.⁴ The forms of the court of David were continued even with more splendor than at Jerusalem. It was distinguished chiefly by the stronger prominence of the military character of the original monarchy. As in Judah, there was the office of Captain of the Host, of such importance that the

¹ 2 Chr. xxi. 12-15.

² Amos ii. 11.

³ 2 Kings x. 15; Jer. xxxv.

⁴ Hosea ii. 11; vi. 6; viii. 13; ix.

4; Amos iv. 4; v. 21-23; vi. 5; viii.

3, 10. (See Dr. Pusey on Hosea, p. 2.)

individual holding it twice succeeded in obtaining possession of the throne,¹ and that favors asked of him were almost equal to those asked of the King himself.² The chariots and horses introduced by Solomon are now so far organized, that we hear for the first time of two divisions of cavalry, each with an officer at its head.³ The same general divisions of the army continued,—the thirty officers,⁴ and the body-guard of runners.⁵ In one important respect, the ancient military glory of Israel was, if not confined to the northern kingdom, yet regarded as eminently characteristic of it. Judah, with all its warlike qualities, had never been celebrated for its archery. The use of the bow was there a late acquisition.⁶ But in Benjamin and Ephraim it had been an habitual weapon. The bow of Jonathan was known far and wide. The children of Ephraim were characterized as “carrying bows.”⁷ And so the chief weapon of the Captain of the Host of Israel was his bow.⁸ The King of Israel had always his bow and arrows with him.⁹ The sign of the fall of the kingdom was the breaking of the bow of Israel.¹⁰ The sign of their weakness was that they were like a deceptive bow.¹¹ The Kings of Israel drive about in chariots, with horsemen¹² behind them (as in the time of Solomon), and a charioteer driving.¹³ There was, as in the court of the Kings of Judah, the Officer of the Household, the Chief Minister of the King, who at times entertained him at banquets,¹⁴ and who was

1 1 Kings xvi. 16 ; 2 Kings ix. 5.

2 2 Kings iv. 13.

3 1 Kings xvi. 9.

4 2 Kings x. 25 ; ix. 25 (Heb.).

5 Ibid. x. 25 (Heb.).

6 2 Sam. i. 18.

7 Ps. lxxviii. 9.

8 2 Kings ix. 24.

9 2 Kings xiii. 15, 16.

10 Hos. i. 5.

11 Ibid. vii. 16 ; Ps. lxxviii. 57.

12 1 Kings xviii. 16 ; compare 2 Kings ix. 25.

13 1 Kings xxii. 34.

14 Ibid. xvi. 9.

received as his representative.¹ The King had a noble attached to his person, on whose arm, in the true Oriental style, he leaned when he appeared in public.² There was a governor of the capital, who bore the exalted name of the "King³ of the City." The King's sons also occupied important places in the state, when the King himself went out to war.⁴ The Court was not, as in Judah, confined to a single capital. Shechem, in spite of its unrivalled attractions, never became to the North what Jerusalem was to the South. The Sovereigns of Israel followed the tendency by which Princes of all times have been led to select pleasant residences apart from the great cities of state. This difference arose partly from the absence of fixed religious associations at Shechem, partly from the succession of dynasties. It was also fostered by the greater opportunities furnished in the north for such an increase of royal residences. In the territory of Ephraim — in this respect the exact reverse of Judah — the fertile plains and wooded hills, which are its characteristic ornaments, at once gave an opening for the formation of parks and pleasure-grounds like the "Paradises" of the Assyrian and Persian monarchies. The first of these was Tirzah, in the hills north of Shechem, of proverbial beauty, selected by Jeroboam, and during three reigns the residence⁵ and burial-place of the royal house. Another was Jezreel. The chief of all was Samaria, which ultimately superseded all the rest. In these capitals the Kings resided, and were buried, as it would seem, with the same pomp as that which accompanied the interment of the Kings of Judah in

¹ 1 Kings xviii. 3, 6.

² 2 Kings vii. 2.

³ 1 Kings xxii. 26 (LXX.).

⁴ 1 Kings xxii. 26.

⁵ Ibid. xiv. 17; xv. 21; xvi. 6, 8, 15.

the vaults of the sepulchre of David. It is, however, a difference characteristic of the two lines of history, that whereas the Kings of Judah were all allowed to rest in their burial-places, it was the savage practice in the revolutions of Israel, not merely to leave unburied the corpses of the dethroned and murdered kings, but to disinter the remains of the whole royal family, and leave them to be mangled by the beasts and birds of prey. Such was the fate that befell successively the dynasties of Jeroboam, Baasha, and Ahab.

The evil effects of the dismemberment are obvious.

But it had also its advantages in bringing out
Its freedom. in fuller growth the diverse elements of the nation and of the country. "Every people, called to "high destinies," it has been well said by the French scholar who has brought out this peculiarity, "ought "to be a small complete world, enclosing opposed poles "within its bosom. Greece had, at a few leagues from "each other, Sparta and Athens, two antipodes to a "superficial observer, but in reality rival sisters, necessary the one to the other. It was the same in Palestine." The fertility, the freshness, the beauty of Ephraim and Manasseh, the wild forest scenery of Zebulun and Naphtali, of Gad and Reuben, were a just counterpoise to the awful barrenness of Judah and Benjamin. There was an exuberance of life and liberty and enjoyment in the north, which perhaps could hardly have been developed in equal strength, had the whole forces of the nation been concentrated round Jerusalem. "The Song of Songs," which, as we have seen, breathes the sense of nature and of natural affection more completely than any other book in the Old Testament, even without accepting the conjecture which ascribes it to the third dynasty of the kings of

Israel, is redolent not of the southern hills of Judah, but of Tirzah, of Sharon, and of Lebanon.¹ Its vines² and fig-trees, the glorious beauty of its fertile valleys,³ seemed the natural reward and crown of the favorite son of Jacob.⁴ Dances, and tabrets, and garlands, were the recognized emblems of the life of Ephraim.⁵ The nobles, like the kings, have their separate palaces for winter and for summer, built, not as heretofore of brick, but of hewn stone, surrounded by pleasant vineyards, and fitted up with divans, and couches inlaid with ivory. Their banquets were splendid, — of the choicest viands from fold and stall; of wine served out in bowls that could only be compared to the large sacrificial vessels of the sanctuary. At these private feasts, as well as at their public festivals, songs were chanted; and they prided themselves on the invention of new musical instruments, as David had added the harp and lyre to the discordant horn and cymbal of an earlier age.⁶ The stately independence of Naboth in his vineyard at Jezreel, or of Shemer on the lofty hill to which he gave his name, and which he would sell to the King only at a vast price, was, doubtless, the common characteristic of many a landholder of the tribes of Ephraim and Issachar. The great lady of Shunem, on the slopes of Esdraelon, in her well-known home, though known to us only through her friendship with a mighty Prophet, is a sample of Israelite life in the north, as true as that of the reaper Boaz or the shepherd Nabal in the south. She manages her husband, she has her servant and her she-ass. Her son

¹ Rénan, *Cantique des Cantiques*; Ewald, ii. 458.

² Hos. ii. 12.

³ Isa. xxviii. 1-4.

⁴ Gen. xlix. 22, 25, 26.

⁵ Judg. xxi. 19 (Heb.), 21; Jer. xxxi. 4.

⁶ Amos iii. 12-15; v. 11; vi. 4-6 (with Dr. Pusey's instructive notes).

goes with his father to the rich cornfields which belong to the house. She leaves her home under the pressure of famine, and goes down to the plains of Philistia. When she returns, and finds a stranger in possession of her cornfields, she insists on restitution, even at the hand of the King himself.¹

In scenes like these, the better spirits of the northern kingdom grew up, it may be with a force and freedom which they could hardly have enjoyed equally under the continual pressure of the imperial despotism of Solomon. Although, as time rolled on, the clouds gathered thick over the central region and the capital of the rival kingdom, which hung over it long after the monarchy itself had been destroyed, yet even in its northernmost parts, the furthest removed from the sanctuary at Jerusalem, in the land of Zebulun and Naphthali, by the way of the sea of Gennesareth, "Galilee of the Gentiles," the circle of a mixed population, half Israelite, half heathen, described as "a people which sate in darkness, in the very region and shadow of death," a life and energy was roused which appears nowhere equally in the south. Out of these remote districts came some of the greatest of the Prophets,—Elijah, Elisha, Hosea, Jonah. And though, in after-times, it was maintained by the proud descendants of Judah that "out of Galilee arose no Prophet," and that from its despised villages "no good thing could come," yet by this benighted region "a great light" at last "was seen,"—"a light" sprang up, which more than compensated for twelve centuries of darkness. For if Bethlehem of Judah witnessed the Redeemer's birth, if the city of David and Solomon assisted at His death,—it was the forests and the birds and the flowers of Galilee, the

¹ 2 Kings iv. 18, 22; viii. 1-6.

haunts of Elijah and Elisha, the cradle of Jonah and Hosea, that cheered and illustrated the Divine Life, the life of thirty years, which has been the Life and Spirit of Christendom.

The Disruption of the kingdom was not the work of a day, but the growth of centuries. To the house of Joseph—that is, to Ephraim, with its The Disruption. adjacent tribes of Benjamin and Manasseh—had belonged, down to the time of David, all the chief rulers of Israel; Joshua, the conqueror; Deborah the one Prophetic, Gideon the one Regal, spirit, of the Judges; Abimelech and Saul, the first kings; Samuel, the restorer of the state after the fall of Shiloh. It was natural that, with such an inheritance of glory, Ephraim always chafed under any rival supremacy. Even against the impartial sway of its own Joshua,¹ or of its kindred heroes, Gideon or Jephthah,² its proud spirit was always in revolt: how much more when the blessing of Joseph seemed to be altogether merged in the blessing of the rival and obscure Judah; when the Lord “refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He had loved.”³ All these embers of disaffection, which had wellnigh burst into a general conflagration in the revolt of Sheba,⁴ were still glowing: it needed but a breath to blow them into a flame.

It was a year after the death of Solomon, that his son Rehoboam arrived at Shechem for his inauguration. It would seem that the ancient capital had not lost its hold

¹ Josh. xvii. 14–18. See Lecture
XI.

³ Ps. lxxviii. 67.

² Judg. viii. 1–3; xii. 1–6. Lect.
XV

⁴ See Lecture XXIV.

altogether on the country, even after the foundation of Jerusalem. The high spirit of the tribe of Ephraim had been bent, but not broken. Their representatives approached the new King with a firm but respectful statement of their grievances, — the enormous exactions of the late king, and the expenditure of the revenues of the kingdom on the royal establishments.¹ The pause before a great catastrophe is always solemn. The sacred

B. C. 985. historian looks back upon the three days during which Rehoboam hesitated, with a grief which no partiality to the house of David has been able to suppress. The demands of the nation were just. The accumulated wisdom of the great Solomonian era recommended concession. The old counsellors gave just such advice as might have been found in the Book of Proverbs. Only the insolence of the younger courtiers imagined the possibility of coercing a great people, and hoped that the little finger of the new Prince would be stronger than the loins of his mighty father. It was a doomed Revolution. “The King hearkened not unto “the people: *for* the cause was of God.” The cry of insurrection was the same that had been raised in the time of David; but with the tremendous difference that now the fatal day was at last come. The sacred names of David and of Jesse had lost their spell. “See to “thine own house, David.” It was with one exception a bloodless revolt. The oldest, as he must have been, of that elder generation which had counselled moderation, but the most obnoxious from the office which he held, Adoram, the tax-collector, was sent by the King to quell the insurrection. They regarded him as a common enemy, and he fell under the savage form of execution

¹ “Thy father made his yoke heavy table heavy.” (LXX. version of 1 upon us, and made the meat of his Kings xii. 4.)

which was usual for treason and blasphemy. He was stoned to death, and the King fled from Shechem, never to return.

The tribe of Ephraim was once more independent. Who was to fill the vacant throne? There was one man, who, by his office and his character, had long ago been indicated as the natural successor of Joshua.¹ At the time when Solomon was constructing the fortifications of Millo underneath the citadel of Zion, his sagacious eye discovered the strength and activity of a young Ephraimite who was employed on the works, and he raised him to the rank of officer over the taxes and labors exacted from the tribe of Ephraim.²

This was Jeroboam. His father had died in his youth, but his mother, who had been a person of loose character,³ lived in her widowhood, trusting apparently to her son for support.⁴ Jeroboam made the most of his position. He completed the fortifications, and was long afterwards known as the man who had "enclosed the city of David."⁵ In his native place, Zereda or Sarira, he lived in a kind of royal state. Like Absalom before him, in like circumstances, though now on a grander scale, in proportion to the enlargement of the royal establishment itself, he kept three hundred chariots and

¹ The account of the life of Jeroboam is given in two versions, so different from each other, and yet each so ancient, as to make it difficult to choose between them. The one usually followed is that contained in the Hebrew text, and in one portion of the LXX. The other is given in a separate account inserted by the LXX. at 1 Kings xi. 43, and xii. 24. This last contains such evident marks of authenticity in some of its details, and is so much more full than the

other, that it will be most conveniently taken as the basis of our account.

² 1 Kings xi. 28.

³ LXX.

⁴ Her name is variously given as Zeruah (Heb.), or Sarira (LXX.), and the place of their abode on the mountains of Ephraim is given either as Zereda, or Sarira (LXX.): in the latter case, as if indicating that there was some connection between the wife of Nebat and her residence.

⁵ LXX.

horses,¹ and was at last perceived to be aiming at the monarchy.

These ambitious designs were probably fostered by the sight of the growing disaffection of the great tribe over which he presided, as well as by the alienation of the Prophetic order from the house of Solomon.

He was banished by Solomon to Egypt. But his exile only increased his importance. The reigning king was Shishak, and with him, Jeroboam, like his ancestor Joseph, acquired so much influence, that when, on Solomon's death, he demanded Shishak's permission to return, the Egyptian king, in his reluctance, seems to have offered any gift which could induce Jeroboam to remain, and the consequence was the marriage with Ano, the elder sister of the Egyptian queen, Tahpenes,² and of another princess, who had married the Edomite chief, Hadad. A year elapsed, and a son, Abijah (or Abijam), was born. Then Jeroboam again requested permission to depart, which was granted; and he returned with his wife and child to his native place, Sarira, or Zereda. It is described as a commanding situation, such as Solomon would naturally have chosen as a fortress to curb the haughty tribe. Now that the great king was gone, this very fortress, strengthened by Jeroboam after his return, became the centre of the disaffected population.

Still there was no open act of insurrection, and it was in this period of suspense, that a pathetic incident darkened the house of Jeroboam. His infant son fell sick. The anxious father sent his wife to inquire of God concerning him. Jerusalem would have been the obvious place to visit for this purpose. But no doubt political reasons forbade. The ancient sanctuary of Shiloh was nearer at hand; and it so happened

Abijah.

¹ LXX.

² LXX. Thekemina.

that a prophet was now residing there, of the highest repute. It was Ahijah — the same who, according to the common version of the story, had already been in communication with Jeroboam, but who, according to the authority we are now following, appears for the first time on this occasion. He was sixty years of age,¹ but was prematurely old, and his eyesight had already failed him. He was living, as it would seem, in poverty, with a boy who waited on him, and with his own little children. For him and for them, the Egyptian princess brought such gifts as were thought likely to be acceptable, — ten loaves, and two rolls for the children,² a bunch of grapes, and a jar of honey. She had disguised herself, to avoid recognition; and perhaps these humble gifts were part of the plan. But the blind Prophet, at her first approach, knew who was coming; and bade his boy go out to meet her, and invite her to his house without delay. There he warned her of the uselessness of her gifts. There was a doom on the house of Jeroboam, not to be averted. The child alone would die before the calamities of the house arrived: “He shall mourn for the child.” — “Woe, O Lord, for in him there is found a good word regarding the Lord,” — or, according to the other version, “All Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him; for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave.”³ The mother returned. As she reëntered the town of Sarira,⁴ the child died. The loud wail of her attendant damsels greeted her on the thresh-old.⁵ The child was buried, as Ahijah had foretold, with all the state of the child of a royal house. “All

¹ Ahijah, according to the tradition, died soon after, and was buried under an oak, still visible in the fourth century, at Shiloh (Epiphanius). His tomb is still shown.

² 1 Kings xiv. 3 (Heb. and LXX.).

³ 1 Kings xiv. 13.

⁴ LXX., in the Hebrew, Tirzah.

⁵ LXX.

"Israel mourned for him."¹ This incident, if it really occurred at this time, seems to have been the turning-point in Jeroboam's career. It drove him from his ancestral home, and it gathered the sympathies of the tribe of Ephraim round him. He left Sarira and came to Shechem.² He was thus at the head of the northern tribes on Rehoboam's appearance.

Two Prophets presided over the formation of the new kingdom. One was Ahijah of Shiloh, the other B. C. 985.
Shemaiah. was Shemaiah³ "the Enlamite." The Prophet — whichever it was,⁴ or at whatever juncture — appeared in a long royal garment, so new that it had never been washed. He stripped it off, tore it into twelve shreds, and gave ten of them to Jeroboam, in token of the ten tribes that were to fall to his sway. Immediately after the stormy conference with Rehoboam, Jeroboam, in accordance with this omen, was elevated to the throne, and then once more the Prophet Shemaiah threw his powerful protection over the new kingdom, and warned off the invading army from the south.⁵ Jeroboam lost no time in consolidating his power. His early architectural skill was brought into play. He was known as the great castle-builder of his time. Not Millo only, and Sarira, but the fortifications of Shechem, and of Penuel beyond the Jordan, were traced back to him.⁶

Down to this point, the religious unity of the nation

¹ 1 Kings xiv. 18.

² The Hebrew text describes that he was sent for. The LXX. speaks of it as his own act.

³ Probably the Shemaiah of 1 Kings xii. 22; 2 Chr. xi. 2. The title given him by the LXX. — "the Enlamite" — does not however appear in the Hebrew.

⁴ The act which in the Hebrew text is ascribed to Ahijah years before, even in Solomon's lifetime, is in the Greek text ascribed to Shemaiah at this very crisis.

⁵ This is in accordance with the Hebrew text of 1 Kings xii. 22 and 2 Chr. xi. 2.

⁶ 1 Kings xii. 25.

had remained unimpaired. This unity appeared to the new King inconsistent with the separate frontier of his kingdom. The Priestly caste were closely linked with the founder of their glory in the house of David ; they were, by the nature of their office, specially attached to the Temple at Jerusalem. Following, doubtless, the precedent of the deposition of Abiathar by Solomon, he removed from their places the whole of the sacerdotal order as it was constituted in the north, and allowed the establishment of a new Priesthood,¹ consecrated by peculiar rites of their own. He determined also on creating two new seats of the national worship, which should rival the newly established Temple of the rival dynasty. It was precisely the policy of Abderahman, caliph of Spain, when he arrested the movement of his subjects to Mecca, by the erection of the holy place of the Zeca at Cordova, and of Abd-el-Malik when he built the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem because of his quarrel with the authorities of Mecca. But he was not satisfied without another deviation from the Mosaic unity of the nation. His long stay in Egypt had familiarized him with the outward forms under which the Divinity was represented. A golden figure² of the sacred calf of Heliopolis was set up at each sanctuary, with the address, — “Behold thy God which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”³ The sanctuary at Dan, as the most remote from Jerusalem, was consecrated first. It was long afterwards held as a tradition in the north of Palestine, that one family, in the ancient sanctuary of Kadesh

¹ 1 Kings xii. 31 ; xiii. 33 ; 2 Chr. xi. 15 ; xiii. 9.

² Ahijah had, according to the legend, seen in a dream two oxen tread-

ing down the people, and goring the priests (Epiphanius, *Vit. Proph.*).

³ 1 Kings xii. 28.

Naphtali, that of Tobit,¹ had refused to share in this strange worship of "the heifer." But the more famous shrine was at the southern frontier of the kingdom, in the consecrated patriarchal sanctuary of and Bethel. Bethel; there the grand inauguration was to take place, and a Festival, which though a month later in the year, was evidently intended to correspond to the Feast of Tabernacles.² The fifteenth day of the eighth month arrived. Jeroboam was there doubtless in his royal state, as Solomon at Jerusalem, to offer incense on the altar, which, we may suppose, was raised within the temple that rose on the hill of Bethel, "the House of God," oldest of all the sanctuaries of Israel and of the world.

It was in this pause, that the first Prophetic protest was made against the new worship. It is as though the Sacred History wished to emphasize the precise moment at which the Prophetic order recovered its equilibrium, and at which the first beginnings of a long superstition were pointed out. Suddenly there rose

before the King a Prophet to whom the Sacred Iddo.

Book gives no name. He had come for this one special purpose. He was not to receive hospitality on coming or going. He was not even to address his message to the King, but to the dumb monument of division, the groundwork of future evil, which stood in the temple. "O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord." The rent in the altar, the withering of the King's hand, the urgency of the elder Prophet to induce the younger to break his vow, the untimely death of the younger Prophet in consequence — are so many additional touches of solemnity in the record of the disastrous inauguration of the Temple of Bethel.

¹ Tobit i. 5, 6.

² 1 Kings xii. 32, 33.

Like all that relates to Jeroboam's career, this story¹ is obscured by conflicting versions. Who was the mysterious Prophet? He has been called by many names, — Joam, according to Epiphanius; Abd-adonai, according to Clement; Jadon, according to Josephus.² We can hardly mistake in the last of these names, the Grecized form of Iddo the seer. He was the author of a work of genealogies, as well as of histories of the reigns of Solomon, of Abijam,³ and of Jeroboam; and it adds to the impressiveness of the warning, if we may suppose that it came from the Chief Prophet of the time. The motives of the Prophet of Bethel are so obscurely given in the Sacred Narrative, and so differently related in the tradition of Josephus,⁴ as almost to defy our scrutiny. He seems to be one of those mixed characters, true to history and human nature, which perpetually appear amongst the sacred persons of the Old Testament; moved by a partial wavering inspiration; aiming after good, yet failing to attain it; full of genuine tender admiration for the Prophet, of whose death he had been the unwilling cause, the mouthpiece of truths which he himself but faintly understood.

The recollection of this scene lingered long on the spot. The sanctuary of Bethel outlived even the monarchy⁵ of Samaria. The "calf" was counted as the God of Israel.⁶ It was regarded as specially the Royal

¹ That the narrative is long subsequent to the events related in it, appears from the phrase "cities of Samaria" (1 Kings xiii. 32).

² See Epiphanius, *Vit. Proph.* c. 3; Clemens Alexand. *Hom.* i. 21; and Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 8, § 5.

³ 2 Chr. ix. 29; xii. 15; xiii. 22. He is possibly the same as Oded, 2 Chr. xv. 1, 8; LXX. 'Αδά or 'Αδδω.

⁴ Joseph. (*Ant.* viii. 9, § 1) de-

scribes the elder Prophet as moved by jealousy, and as explaining away to Jeroboam the miracles that attended the coming of the Judean Prophet. "The king's arm was fatigued; the altar fell because it was new." In Josephus the divine warning of 1 Kings xiii. 20, 21 came direct to the younger Prophet.

⁵ 2 Kings xvii. 28; xxiii. 15.

⁶ Hosea viii. 5; xiii. 2 (Ewald).

Temple. A succession of Priests ministered within it, and were buried in the long array of rock-hewn tombs in the valley beneath. Musical services resounded within its courts. But the altar still was considered, at least by the Southern Prophets, as an accursed spot. The doom which Iddo had pronounced upon it was fulfilled, if not before, at least when in one of the earthquake shocks in the time of Amos¹ it was shaken to its foundations. And when at last the place was devastated on the fall of the kingdom with which it was connected, Josiah pulled down the whole structure, and had its very stones ground to dust, and mingled with the ashes of the bones which he found in the adjacent caves. One only monument was left standing. The story of Iddo was still remembered in the neighborhood. The oak, probably the consecrated oak of Deborah, under which he had sat, — the spot, as it would seem, where, on the rocky road, the body had been found with the lion and the ass standing by, were still known; and over his grave had been raised a memorial which even the ardor of Josiah's reformation did not destroy.

The details of Jeroboam's end are lost to us. It is overclouded by unsuccessful wars with Judah, by wasting illness, and by the violent convulsion in which his remains and those of his children were torn from their sepulchres.² To observe clearly wherein his sin consisted, is to observe the moral of the whole of this part of the history. It was not that he had revolted against the house of Judah. For this, according to the narrative, had been put upon him by the direct Provi-

¹ That the rending of the altar took place in the time of Amos (ix. 1), is confirmed by the LXX. reading of 2 Kings xiii. 3 : *δῶσει τέρας ἐν ἐκείνῃ*

τῇ ἡμέρᾳ. In that case verse 5 is inserted proleptically.

² 1 Kings xiv. 10, 11 ; xv. 29.

dence and sanction of God. Nor that he had fallen into idolatry. This was the sin of Solomon and Rehoboam, against which his whole life was a perpetual protest. It was that to secure those good ends he adopted doubtful and dangerous means. The anticipations of the Prophets concerning him had been frustrated. Like the apostolic Las Casas in the sad history of South America, they saw with bitter grief the failure of the institution which they had fostered, and from which they had hoped so much. It is this reflection which gives a keenness of regret to the epithet so many times repeated, "The sin of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." To keep the first commandment, he broke the second; to preserve the belief in the unity of God, he broke the unity and tampered with the spiritual conception of the national worship. The ancient sanctity of Dan and Bethel, the time-honored Egyptian sanction of the Sacred Calf, were mighty precedents; the Golden Image was doubtless intended as a likeness of the One True God. But the mere fact of setting up such a likeness broke down the sacred awe which had hitherto marked the Divine Presence, and accustomed the minds of the Israelites to the very sin against which the new form was intended to be a safeguard. From worshipping God under a false and unauthorized form, they gradually learnt to worship other gods altogether; and the venerable sanctuaries at Dan and Bethel prepared the way for the Temples of Ashtaroath and Baal at Samaria and Jezreel; and the religion of the Kingdom of Israel at last sank lower even than that of the Kingdom of Judah, against which it had revolted.

"The sin of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat," is the sin again and again repeated in the policy, half-worldly, half-religious, which has prevailed through large tracts

of ecclesiastical history. Many are the forms of worship in the Christian Church, which, with high pretensions, have been nothing else but “so many various and “opposite ways of breaking the second commandment.” Many a time has the end been held to justify the means; and the Divine character been degraded by the pretence or even the sincere intention of upholding His cause: for the sake of secular aggrandizement; for the sake of binding together good systems, which, it was feared, would otherwise fall to pieces; for the sake of supporting the faith of the multitude from the fear lest they should fall away to rival sects, or lest the enemy should come and take away their place and nation, false arguments have been used in support of religious truth, false miracles promulgated or tolerated, false readings in the sacred text defended. And so the faith of mankind has been undermined by the very means intended to preserve it. The whole subsequent history is a record of the mode by which, with the best intentions, a church and nation may be corrupted.

LECTURE XXX.

THE HOUSE OF OMRI.

ELIJAH.

THE revolution that planted the house of Omri on the throne can be traced with more or less distinctness from its resemblance to that by which the same dynasty was itself overthrown. B. C. 961.

For the space of no less than twenty-seven years, there had continued one of those long sieges that have made the cities of Philistia famous. Ashdod was afterwards besieged by Psammeticus for exactly the same period, as was now the case with Gibbethon.¹ The camp before Gibbethon, as afterwards that at Ramoth-gilead, became as it were a separate power in the state. It was there that Baasha had surprised and murdered Nadab, and extirpated the whole of the royal family of Jeroboam. He himself had risen from the ranks,—“from the dust,”—and a new Prophetic glory hung for a moment over his path. But he too adopted the policy of the dynasty which he had overthrown; and for this, as well as for his cruelty to the fallen family, the signal for his destruction was given by the Prophet Jehu.

The first who dealt the deadly blow was not the one who ultimately succeeded. The cavalry was divided into two portions,—one apparently at B. C. 935. the camp, the other nearer the capital of Tirzah.² It

¹ 1 Kings xv. 27; xvi. 15.

² 1 Kings xvi. 9, 16.

was over this body that the first conspirator presided. Zimri, possibly the descendant of the royal house of Saul,¹ attacked the King in a drunken revel in the house of the chief officer of his court, and murdered him and the whole of the royal family before assistance could be procured from the army.²

It was but a brief victory. The rapid vengeance on Zimri was a tradition which long lingered in the memory of the royal family of Israel.³ As soon as the news reached the camp, the true successor to the house of Baasha was chosen in the person of Omri, the captain of the host. Zimri fled into the interior, perhaps into the harem, of the palace, and perished, Sardanapalus-like, in the flames.⁴ His usurpation had lasted only for a week. But a civil war broke out on his death, between Omri on the one side and two brothers, Tibni and Joram,⁵ on the other, which, after a duration of four years, ended in the triumph of Omri.

His accession to the throne after such a succession of troubles would of itself have been an epoch. But it was significant in many ways. He must have been himself remarkable, from the emphatic manner in which his name is used as the founder⁶ of his family, and even of the monarchy itself, as well as from the one incident which is recorded of him.

¹ 1 Chr. viii. 36. See Lecture XXI.

² 1 Kings xvi. 9, 10; Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 12, § 4.

³ 2 Kings ix. 31.

⁴ 1 Kings xvi. 18. (See Ewald, *iii.* 451.)

⁵ *Ibid.* 21, 22 (LXX.).

⁶ Athaliah, though daughter of

Ahab, is called the "daughter of Omri;" Samaria is styled in the Assyrian inscriptions "the house of Omri;" and even Jehu, the destroyer of the dynasty of Omri, is called in the same documents "the son of Omri." (Rawlinson, *Five Monarchies*, ii. 364.) The "Statutes of Omri" are mentioned by Micah (vi. 16).

As Constantine's sagacity is fixed by his choice of Constantinople, so is that of Omri by his choice of Samaria. Six miles from Shechem, in the same well-watered valley, here opening into a wide basin, rises an oblong hill, with steep yet accessible sides, and a long level top. This was the mountain of Samaria, or, as it is called in the original, Shômeron, so named after its owner Shemer, who there lived in state, and who sold it to the King for the great sum of two talents of silver. It combined in a union not elsewhere found in Palestine, strength, beauty, and fertility. It commanded a full view of the sea and the plain of Sharon on the one hand, and of the vale of Shechem on the other. The town¹ sloped down from the summit of the hill; a broad wall with a terraced top² ran round it. Outside the gates lived a colony³ of unhappy lepers, such as are still to be seen under the walls of Jerusalem. In front of the gates was a wide open space or threshing-floor,⁴ where the Kings of Samaria sat on great occasions. The inferior houses were built of white brick, with rafters of sycamore; the grander of hewn stone and cedar.⁵ It stood amidst a circle of hills,⁶ commanding a view of its streets and slopes, itself the crown and glory of the whole scene.⁷ Its soft rounded oblong platform was, as it were, a vast luxurious couch, in which its nobles rested securely, "propped and cushioned up "on both sides, as in the cherished corner of a rich "divan."⁸

It was the only great city of Palestine created by the

¹ 2 Kings vi. 33. See Lecture XXXIII. p. 345. name remained after the original use had departed.

² 2 Kings vi. 26, 30.

⁵ Isaiah ix. 9, 10.

³ Ibid. vii. 3.

⁶ Amos iii. 9.

⁴ 1 Kings xxii. 1. Possibly the

⁷ Isaiah xxviii. 1.

⁸ Amos iii. 12 (Dr. Pusey's note).

sovereigns. All the others had been already consecrated by Patriarchal tradition, or previous possession. But Samaria was the choice of Omri alone. He indeed gave to the city which he had built the name of its former owner, but its especial connection with himself as its founder is proved by the designation which, it seems, Samaria bears in Assyrian inscriptions, — *Beth-Khumri*, — “The House, or Palace, of Omri.”¹

With this change of capital, a new era opened on Israel, which was continued on the accession of Ahab. B. C. 919. Omri’s son Ahab. New cities were built in various parts of the kingdom.² Two especially are named, both remarkable for the beauty of their situation. One was rather a revival, than a creation. It was in the days of Ahab that a daring architect of

Jericho. Bethel, named Hiel, ventured to raise Jericho from its ruins, in defiance of the curse of Joshua, which received its fulfilment in the death of the architect’s eldest son at the beginning, and youngest son at the completion, of his design.³ The other was a new

Jezreel. royal residence, erected by Ahab, at Jezreel, although not superseding his father’s choice of Samaria. It was planted on a gentle eminence, in the very centre of the rich plain, — “the seed or sowing-place “of God,” — from whence, doubtless, it derived its name; commanding the view of Carmel on the west, and the valley of the Jordan on the east. Towards this side, a high tower stood, commanding the eastern approach.⁴ The palace was built close on the city wall, above the gateway, and the windows of the seraglio looked out to the public street immediately within the gate.⁵ Within its walls, or forming a conspicuous part

¹ Rawlinson, *Bampt. Lect.* 105; ³ 1 Kings xvi. 34.

Herod. i. 465, 7.

⁴ 2 Kings ix. 17.

² 1 Kings xxii. 39.

⁵ Ibid. 30, 31.

of the royal residence, was a palace built wholly or in part of ivory,¹ a proof that the commerce of Solomon, by which elephants' tusks were brought from India, had not yet ceased; and an example of architecture that apparently spread to the dwellings of the Israelite aristocracy.²

In accordance with this growth in arts and luxury, Ahab is the first of the northern kings who appears to have practised polygamy.³ But over his harem presided a Queen who has thrown all her lesser ^{Jezebel.} rivals into the shade. For the first time the chief wife of an Israelite king was one of the old accursed Canaanite race. A new dynasty now sat on the Tyrian throne, founded by Eth-baal. He had, according to the Phœnician records, gained the crown by the murder of his brother, and he united to the royal dignity his former office of High Priest of Ashtaroath.⁴ The daughter of Eth-baal was JEZEBEL, a name of dreadful import to Israelitish ears, though in later ages it has reappeared under the innocent form of Isabella.

The marriage of Ahab with this princess was one of those turning-points in the history of families where a new influence runs like poison through all its branches, and transforms it into another being. It has been conjectured by a German critic that the 45th Psalm, usually applied to the marriage of Solomon with the daughter of Pharaoh, was really written for the marriage of Ahab and Jezebel. The common opinion has quite enough in its favor to render needless an application so offensive to our modern notions. Yet there are expressions which suit this event better than any

¹ 1 Kings xxii. 39.

² Amos iii. 15; vi. 4.

³ "Thy wives," 1 Kings xx. 5;

also the seventy sons, 2 Kings x. 7.

⁴ Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 13, § 1; c.

Apion. i. 18.

other, — “the ivory palaces,” “the daughter of Tyre,” — and the absence of any allusions to Jerusalem. And there may have been at the time no more of evil omen to overcast the hopes of the Psalmist, than in the marriage-feast of Solomon, or than in the alliance of David with Hiram. But the cloud soon began to gather. Jezebel was a woman in whom, with the reckless and licentious habits of an Oriental queen, were united the fiercest and sternest qualities inherent in the old Semitic race. Her husband, in whom generous and gentle feelings were not wanting, was yet of a weak and yielding character, which soon made him a tool in her hands. Even after his death, through the reigns of his sons, her presiding spirit was the evil genius of the dynasty. Through her daughter Athaliah — a daughter worthy of the mother — her influence extended to the rival kingdom. The wild license of her life and the magical fascination of her arts or her character, became a proverb in the nation.¹ Round her and from her, in different degrees of nearness, is evolved the awful drama of the most eventful crisis of this portion of the Israelite history.

The first indication of her influence was the establishment of the Phœnician worship on a grand scale in the court of Ahab. To some extent this was the natural consequence of the depravation of the public worship of *JEHOVAH*, by Jeroboam; which seems under Omri to have taken a more directly idolatrous turn.² But still the change from a symbolical worship of the One True God, with the innocent rites of sacrifice and prayer, to the cruel and licentious worship of the Phœnician divinities, was a prodigious step downwards, and left traces in northern Palestine which no subsequent

¹ 2 Kings ix. 22.

² 1 Kings xvi. 25, 26.

reformations were able entirely to obliterate. Two sanctuaries were established; one for each of the great Phœnician deities, at each of the two new capitals of the kingdom. The sanctuary of Ashtarothe, with its accustomed grove, was under Jezebel's special sanction, at the palace of Jezreel. Four hundred priests or prophets ministered to it, and were supported at her table.¹ A still more remarkable sanctuary was dedicated to Baal, on the hill of Samaria. It was of a size sufficient to contain all the worshippers of Baal² that the northern kingdom could furnish. Four hundred and fifty prophets frequented it. In the interior was a kind of inner fastness or adytum, in which were seated or raised on pillars the figures carved in wood³ of the Phœnician deities as they were seen, in vision, centuries later, by Jezebel's fellow-countryman, Hannibal, in the sanctuary of Gades. In the centre was Baal, the Sun-god; around him were the inferior divinities.⁴ In front of the temple, stood on a stone pillar the figure of Baal alone.⁵

As far as this point of the history, the effect of the heathen worship was not greater than it had been in Jerusalem. But there soon appeared to be a more energetic spirit at work than had ever come forth from the palace of Solomon or Rehoboam. Now arose the first of a long series of like events in ecclesiastical history — the first GREAT PERSECUTION — the first The Persecution. persecution on a large scale, which the Church

1 1 Kings xviii. 19; xvi. 33.

2 2 Kings x. 26.

2 Ibid. xvi. 32; xviii. 19, 22. For the name "Baal" was often substituted in Israelite phraseology the contemptuous *bosheth*, or "shame." This seems to have been the text followed by the LXX. (xviii. 19).

4 Compare the inscriptions at Baalbec, in Robinson, *Bib. Res.* iii. 509, 521; and the vision of Hannibal in Livy, xxi. 22.

5 2 Kings x. 27; iii. 2.

had witnessed in any shape. The extermination of the Canaanites, however bloody, and unlike the spirit of Christian times, had yet been in the heat of war and victory. Those who remained in the land were unmolested in their religious worship, as they were in their tenure of property and of office. It was reserved for the heathen Jezebel to exemplify the principle of persecution in its most direct form. To her, and not to Moses or Joshua, the bitter intolerance of modern times must look back as its legitimate ancestress.

The first beginnings of the persecution are not recorded. A chasm occurs in the sacred narrative, which must have contained the story, only known to us through subsequent allusions, — how the persecutors passed from hill to hill, destroying the many altars which rose, as in the south, so in the north of Palestine, to the One True God — how the Prophets, who had hitherto held their own in Israel, were hunted down as the chief enemies of the new religion.¹ Now began those hidings in caves and dens of the earth, — the numerous caverns of the limestone rocks of Palestine, — the precursors of the history of the Catacombs and the Covenanters. A hundred fugitives might have been seen, broken up into two companies, guided by the friendly hand of the chief minister of Ahab's court, — the Sebastian of this Jewish Diocletian, — and hid in spacious caverns, probably amongst the clefts of Carmel.²

It might have seemed as if, in the kingdom of Israel, — down to this time a refuge from the idolatrous court of Judah, — the last remnants of the true religion were to perish. But the blessing which had been pro-

¹ 1 Kings xviii. 4, 13, 22; xix. 10,
14; 2 Kings ix. 7.

² 1 Kings xviii. 13; compare Amos
ix. 3.

nounced on the new kingdom was still mightier than its accompanying curse.

It was at this crisis, that there appeared the very chief of the Prophets. "Alone, alone, alone,"^{Elijah.} —so thrice over is the word emphatically repeated,¹ —the loftiest, sternest spirit of the True Faith raised up face to face with the proudest and fiercest spirit of the old Asiatic Paganism, against Jezebel rose up Elijah² the Tishbite.

He stood alone against Jezebel. He stands alone in many senses amongst the Prophets. Nursed in the bosom of Israel, the Prophetic portion, if one may so say, of the chosen People, vindicating the true religion from the nearest danger of overthrow, setting at defiance by invisible power the whole forces of the Israelite kingdom, he reached a height equal to that of Moses and Samuel, in the traditions of his country. He was the Prophet, for whose return in later years his countrymen have looked with most eager hope. The last Prophet of the Old Dispensation clung to this consolation in the decline of the State.³ In the Gospel history we find this expectation constantly excited in each successive appearance of a new Prophet.⁴ It was a fixed belief of the Jews that he had appeared again and again, as an Arabian merchant, to wise and good Rabbis at their prayers or on their journeys. A seat is still placed for him to superintend the circumcision of the Jewish children. Passover after passover, the Jews of our own day place the paschal cup on the table, and set the door wide open, believing that that is the moment when Elijah will reappear. When goods

¹ 1 Kings xviii. 22; xix. 10, 14.

² His full name is Elijahu.

³ Malachi iv. 5.

⁴ Matt. xi. 14; xvi. 14; Luke ix.

8; John i. 21, 25, &c.

are found and no owner comes, when difficulties arise and no solution appears, the answer is, "Put them by 'till Elijah comes."

He appears to have given the whole order a new impulse, both in form and spirit, such as it had not had since the death of Samuel. The companies of the Prophets now reappear, bound by a still closer connection with Elijah than they had been with Samuel. Then they were "companies, bands, of Prophets," now they are "sons, children, of the Prophets;" and Elijah first, and Elisha afterwards, appeared as the "Father," the "Abbot," the "Father in God" of the whole community.¹ His mission was, however, not to be the revealer of a new truth, but the champion of the old forgotten law. He was not so much a Prophetic teacher as the Precursor of Prophetic teachers. As his likeness in the Christian era came to prepare the way for One greater than himself, so Elijah came to prepare the way for the close succession of Prophets who, for the next hundred years, sustained both Israel and Judah by hopes and promises before unknown. As of Luther, so of Elijah, it may be said that he was a Reformer, and not a Theologian. He wrote, he predicted, he taught, almost nothing. He is to be valued, not for what he said, but for what he did; not because he created, but because he destroyed.

For this, his especial mission, his life and appearance especially qualified him. Of all the Prophets, he is the one who is most removed from modern times, from Christian civilization. There is a wildness, an isolation, a roughness about him, contrasting forcibly even with the mild beneficence of his immediate successor Elisha, still more with the bright serenity of Isaiah, and the

¹ See Keil on 2 Kings ii. 12.

plaintive tenderness of Jeremiah, but most of all with the patience and loving-kindness of the Gospel. Round his picture in the Churches of Eastern Christians at the present day are placed by a natural association the decapitated¹ heads of their enemies. Abdallah Pasha, the fierce lord of Acre, almost died of terror, from a vision in which he believed himself to have seen Elijah sitting on the top of Carmel. It is the likeness of his stern seclusion which is reproduced in John the Baptist, and which in him is always contrasted with the social, gentle character of Christ. He, like the Baptist, "came "neither eating nor drinking." He, like the disciples of John, "fasted oft."² He was the original type of the hermit, the monk, the Puritan. The barefooted Order of Carmelites, not indeed by historical but by spiritual descent, may well claim him as their founder. But he is not the type of ordinary Christians. Although "among them that were born of woman" in old time "there were none greater than" he and his representatives, yet "notwithstanding, the least in the kingdom "of Heaven is greater than he and they."³ When the two Apostles, appealed to the example of Elijah, "to "call down fire from heaven," He to whom they spoke turned away with indignation from the remembrance of this act, even of the greatest of his Prophetic predecessors. "He rebuked them." He went even further, and is recorded to have said, "Ye know not what spirit "ye are of."⁴ The Spanish Inquisitors in the 16th century⁵ quoted the act of Elijah and the appeal of the

¹ Rénan, *Vie de Jésus*, 96.

² Matt. ix. 14, 15; xi. 18, 19.

³ Ibid. xi. 11.

⁴ Luke ix. 55, 56. The variations of the MSS., perhaps from the hesitation of the copyists to admit so start-

ling a doctrine, compel us to quote this conclusion of our Lord's address with some reserve.

⁵ Prescott, *Ferdinand and Isabella*, i. 330.

sons of Zebedee as a justification of their own cruelties. "Lo," they said, "fire is the natural punishment of "heretics." They forgot, or they knew not, that the act of Elijah was repudiated forever by One to whom he was but the distant forerunner.

Suddenly, Elijah appears before us in the narrative, as he appeared in his lifetime before Ahab and the children of Israel. Suddenly he appears, like Melchizedec, and suddenly he disappears, "without father, without "mother, without descent, having neither beginning of "days, nor end of life." Not unnaturally did the ancient Rabbis believe him to be the fiery Phinehas returned to earth, or an angel hovering on the outskirts of the world. Not unnaturally have the Mussulman traditions confounded him with the mysterious being, "The Immortal One" (El Khudr), the Eternal Wanderer, who appears, ever and anon, to set right the wrongs of earth, and repeat the experience of ages past. Not unnaturally did the mediæval alchemists and magicians strive to trace up their dark arts to Elijah the Tishbite, the Father of Alchemy. The other Prophets — Moses, Samuel, Elisha, Isaiah — were constantly before the eyes of their countrymen. But Elijah they saw only by partial and momentary glimpses. He belonged to no special place. The very name of his birthplace is disputed. "There was no nation or kingdom" to which Ahab had not sent to find him — "but behold, they "found him not." As soon as he was seen, "the breath "of the Lord carried him away, whither they knew "not." He was as if constantly in the hand of God. "As "the Lord liveth, before whom I stand," was his habitual expression, — a slave constantly waiting to do his master's bidding.¹ For an instant he was to be seen here

¹ 1 Kings xvii. 1 ; xviii. 15. Comp. 1 Kings x. 8.

and there at spots far apart; sometimes in the ravine of the Cherith in the Jordan valley, sometimes in the forests of Carmel; now on the sea-shore of Zidon, at Zarephath; now in the wilderness of Horeb, in the distant south; then far off on his way to the northern Damascus; then on the top of some lonely height on the way to Ekron; then snatched away, "on some mountain or some valley" in the desert of the Jordan. He was in his lifetime, what he still is in the traditions of the Eastern Church, the Prophet of the mountains.¹

Wherever might be the exact² spot of his birth, he was "of the inhabitants of Gilead." He was the greatest representative of the tribes from beyond the Jordan. Their wild and secluded character is his no less. Wandering, as we have seen, over the hills of Palestine, with no rest or fixed habitation,—fleet as the wind, when the hand of the Lord was upon him, and he ran before the chariot of Ahab from Carmel to Jezreel,—he was like the heroes of his own tribe in Gad, in David's life, who swam the Jordan in floodtime, "whose faces were as the faces of lions, and whose feet were swift as the roes upon the mountains;" like the Bedouins from the same region at the present day, who run with unwearyed feet by the side of the traveller's camel, and whose strange forms are seen for a moment behind rock or tree, in city or field, and then vanish again into their native wilderness. And such as they are, such was he also in his outward appearance. Long shaggy hair

¹ Mar Elyas (Lord Elijah) is a common name all through the Levant for prominent and sacred eminences (Clark's *Peloponnesus*, p. 190). is more than a mistaken reading of "the inhabitants." See Mr. Grove on ELLIAH and TISHBITE in *Dict. of Bible*.

² It is doubtful whether "Tishbite"

flowed over his back; ¹ and a large ² rough mantle of sheepskin, ³ fastened around his loins by a girdle of hide, ⁴ was his only covering. This mantle, the special token of his power, at times he would strip off, and roll up like a staff in his hand; at other times wrap his face in it. ⁵

These characteristics of the Arab life were dignified but not destroyed by his high Prophetic mission. And the fact that this mission was intrusted not to a dweller in royal city or Prophetic school, but to a genuine child of the deserts and forests of Gilead, is in exact accordance with the dispensations of Providence in other times. So the Unity of God was asserted of old by the wandering chief from Ur of the Chaldees; by the Arabian shepherd at Sinai; and (without offence, it may be added) by another Arabian shepherd, in later ages, at Mecca and Medina. So, in the spirit and power of Elijah, came John the son of Zechariah in the same wilderness whence Elijah came, and whence he finally disappeared, sustained by the wild and scanty fare of the desert, clothed in a like rough and scanty garb, calling the nation to repentance by the same strange appearance, and by the same simple preaching. So, in later times, the anchorites of Egypt, and of Russia, have come forth from their solitudes with a startling effect, which nothing else could have produced, to call kings and nations to a sense of their guilt, and of their duty to God and man.

¹ Chrysostom calls him (as he does St. Paul) *τρίπηχυσ*—three cubits high.

² *Addereth*, “ample,” only used besides in Gen. xxv. 25; Josh. vii. 21, 24; Jon. iii. 6; Zech. xi. 3; xiii. 4. See MANTLE in *Dict. of Bible*.

³ LXX. *μηλωτή*. A fragment of it is said to be treasured up at Oviedo.

⁴ 2 Kings i. 8; comp. Mark i. 6. “Elijah was evidently the type of the modern dervishes, who allow their hair to grow any length, and wind a leathern girdle round their loins” (Morier, MS. notes).

⁵ 1 Kings xix. 13; 2 Kings. ii. 8 (Heb.).

Such a Prophet was naturally marked out for the extremest hatred of the Court of Samaria. Emissaries were sent out to search for him even beyond the limits of Palestine. If he could not be found, vengeance was wreaked¹ on the spot which was supposed to have concealed him. But at last the persecution itself was stayed by a visitation such as in all times of the world has in mercy checked even the violence of fanaticism.

For three years an unusual drought fell upon Palestine. For a year, at least, it extended also to Phœnicia.² To our minds, the word hardly ^{The drought.} conveys an adequate notion of the extent of the visitation. But to Eastern and Southern nations, where life and water go always together, where vegetation gathers round the slightest particle of moisture, and dies the moment that it is withdrawn; where the scanty verdure of spring fades, like melting snow, before the burning heat of summer — the withholding of rain is the withholding of pleasure, of sustenance, of life itself; the springs are dried up, the brooks and rivers become beds of stone, the trees wither, the grass vanishes, “the heaven that is over thee becomes brass, and the earth that is under thee is as iron.” Such a visitation was exactly the crisis for a True Prophet to make himself heard. We see him in a twofold aspect; first as an individual sufferer, then as a public champion of God, and instructor of the nation.

The first story shows us the pathetic, gentle recollections which mingled with the national traditions even of this sternest of the Prophets. In the ^{The Cherith.} green thickets which gathered round the yet unex-

¹ 1 Kings xviii. 10 (LXX.).

Menander, in Josephus (*Ant.* viii. 13,

² *Ibid.* xvii. 15 (Heb.); and § 2).

hausted waters in the bed of the Cherith,¹ the Prophet first hid himself. To him, as to the Prophets of the Jordan valley generally, the leafy covert of the forest was no unusual refuge. Thither, we are told, night and morning, came the ravens² that frequented that one green spot, “the young ravens” of Palestine that cry to God — “the ravens” whom God feedeth, “though they “neither sow nor reap” — and laid their portion of bread and flesh at break of day, and at fall of evening, by the side of the gushing stream; and of the fresh waters of that gushing stream he drank, and his life was preserved.

But the drought advanced, and the pools in the water-course were dried up, and the trees withered on its banks, and the fowls of the air ceased to flock to their branches; “and the word of the LORD “came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, “which belongeth to Zidon.” It was far away that he had to go, — beyond the borders of the land of Israel, over the hills of Lebanon, down into the maritime plain, to the spot whence, in Gentile fables, Europa was carried off to give her name and power to the isles of the West. The fresh streams of Lebanon would retain their life-giving power after the scantier springs of Palestine had been dried up. But there also the drought had reached. We learn from heathen records,³ that the famine was long remembered in Phœnicia, and that solemn prayers

The widow
of Zare-
phath.

¹ The situation of the Cherith is uncertain. The expression “before the Jordan,” and the connection with Elijah, point to the east of the river. Dr. Robinson, however, seeks to identify it with the Wady Kelt, and Mr. Van de Velde with the Wady Fasaal on the west. The account of the latter (*Syria and Palestine*, ii. 309) well describes what the Cherith must have been, wherever it was.

² For the whole of this subject, see the treatise, “Elias corvorum convictor,” in *Critici Sacri*.

³ Menander, in Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 13, § 2.

were offered up in the temples of Astarte by Ethbaal, king of Tyre, for the descent of rain upon the earth. In the village of Zarephath, overlooking the plain and the sea, dwelt a widow, of the same race¹ and religion as Ethbaal and Jezebel. She had come out of the gate of the town to gather sticks, as she thought, for her last meal; and, as she gathered them, she heard the voice of one faint and weary with thirst and long travel, — “Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.” She saw and turned, and once again he asked, “Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.”² It was one of those sudden recognitions of unknown kindred souls, one of those cross-purposes of Providence, which come in with a peculiar charm to checker the commonplace course of ecclesiastical history. The Phœnician mother knew not what great destinies lay in the hand of that gaunt figure at the city gate, worn with travel, and famine, and drought; she obeyed only the natural instinct of humanity, she listened to his cry, as that of one who suffered as she was suffering, she saw in him only at most the Prophet of a hostile tribe. But she saved in him the deliverer of herself and her son. There was a rebound of unexpected benefits such as sometimes even in the prose of common life equals the poetic justice of an ideal world. It may be that this incident is the basis of the sacred blessing of the Prophet of Prophets on those who, even by “a cup of cold water,” “receiving a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophet’s reward.”³ But He makes a more direct comment on the whole story, which brings out a loftier and more striking peculiarity: “There were many widows in Israel in the days of

¹ She says, “Thy God,” 1 Kings xvii. 12.

² 1 Kings xvii. 9–16.

³ Matt. x. 41, 42.

“Elijah, but to none of them was Elijah sent, save to “Zarephath, a city of Zidon.”¹ He whose life was to be employed in protesting against the false worship of Tyre and Zidon was now to have his life preserved by one who was herself a slave of that false worship. It seems like a foretaste of Gospel times that this one gleam of a gentler light should be shed over the beginning of his fierce and stormy course; that we should see the Prophet of Israel and the woman of Zidon dwelling peaceably under the same roof, and sharing together the last remains of her scanty sustenance; she giving food and shelter to the enemy of her country’s gods, and he creating and supporting the scanty faith of the good heathen. It was a prelude to the scene which, many generations later, took place near that very spot, when a greater than Elijah overstepped for once the limits of the Holy Land, and passed into the coasts of Tyre and Zidon, and met the Syro-Phœnician woman of the same accursed race, and blessed her faith, and told her that it should be even as she would.² It is a likeness of the way in which distress and danger make strange bed-fellows, bring together those who are most unlike. The horrors of famine, the shadow of the death-bed, are the Divine conciliators of the deadliest feuds. In the history of the Church, no less than of the individual soul, man’s necessity is God’s opportunity for healing the widest differences. These reconcilements may be but for the moment; the iron grasp which has been forced open by those sudden efforts, closes again. Yet the grasp becomes less tenacious. The end of the golden wedge has made itself felt. It was a true feeling of the Jewish Church, if it were not a true tradition, which saw in the restoration of the widow’s son to life a pledge of the

¹ Luke iv. 25, 26.

² Matt. xv. 22–28; Mark vii. 24–30.

future that was to arise out of this double act of toleration. In this boy (so later ages delighted to believe¹) was recovered the first Prophet of the Gentile world, Jonah, the son of Amittai; repaying, in his mission of mercy and pity to the Assyrian Nineveh, the mercy and pity which his mother had shown to the Israelite wanderer.

The drought still advanced. The third year was now arrived; and (as usually takes place in Eastern countries, when the calamity reaches its highest pitch) the King himself set forth, with his chief minister, to seek for such patches of vegetation as could be found for the sustenance of the royal stables. At last the mysterious Prophet, whom each had desired to see for so long, appeared suddenly before them. "Behold, "Elijah!" was the message which the faithful Obadiah was to take back to Ahab, — two awful words, which he thrice repeats, before he can be induced to return.² "Art thou my lord Elijah?" was the reverential salute of the minister. "Art thou the troubler of Israel?" was the angry question of the King. But it was an anger that soon sunk into awe. Face to face at last they met, the Prophet and the King. In that hour of extreme despair, the voice of Elijah sounded with an authority which it had never had before. The drought, we are told, had been threatened by him. It was then, doubtless, as it still is, the belief of Eastern countries, that seers and saints have the power of withholding or giving rain. In the convent of Mount Sinai, the Arabs believe that there is a book, by the opening or shutting of which the monks can disperse or retain the rain of the peninsula. The persecuting King became

¹ Jerome, *Pref. ad Jonam*. See ² 1 Kings xviii. 8, 11, 14.
Lecture XXXIII.

a passive instrument in the hand of the persecuted Prophet. An assembly such as that which is described in the book of Joel,¹ was summoned to a sanctuary, now first mentioned in the Sacred History, though it evidently had long existed, and has never since entirely lost its sanctity. Carmel was the peculiar haunt of Elijah. On its eastern summit, commanding the last view of the Mediterranean Sea, and the first view of the great plain of Esdraelon, just where the glades of forest—the “excellency,” whence it derives its name—sink into the usual bareness of the hills of Manasseh, a rock is still shown bearing the name of Maharrakah,—“the sacrifice.” On this rock stood an altar of JEHOVAH,² which had, in all probability, been destroyed in the recent persecution: on this same spot, probably, long afterwards, Vespasian sacrificed, when commanding the Roman armies in Palestine; and to this the Druzes still come in yearly pilgrimage. Close beneath, in an upland plain, round a well³ of perennial water, which, from its shady and elevated situation, seems to have escaped the effect of the drought, were ranged on the one side the King and people, with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal dressed in their splendid vestments;⁴ and on the other side the one solitary figure of the Prophet of the Lord, in his rough sheepskin cloak. In the distance, and on its commanding position, overlooking the whole valley, rose the stately city of Jezreel, with Ahab’s palace and Jezebel’s temple embosomed in its sacred grove. Immediately under their feet spread far and wide that noble plain, the battle-field of Sacred History, the plain

¹ Joel iii. 2, 14.

³ Josephus (*Ant.* viii. 13, § 5).

² 1 Kings xviii. 30. “He repaired the altar of Jehovah which had been broken down.”

⁴ Compare 2 Kings x. 22.

of Megiddo or Jezreel; with the torrent Kishon, passing, as its name implies, in countless windings, through the level valley; that "ancient stream," on whose banks had perished the host of Sisera, and the host of Midian, before the army of Deborah and Barak, before the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. In such a scene, with such recollections of the past, were the people of Israel gathered for a conflict as momentous as any which had taken place in the plain beneath.

It was the early morning. There was a deep silence over the whole multitude, when the Prophet made his appeal to them. "They answered him not a word."

Every incident that follows, well known through the sacred music into which it has been woven, enhances the contrast between the True and the False, in this grand ordeal. On the one side is the exact picture of Oriental fanaticism, such as may still be seen in Eastern religions. As the Mussulman Dervishes work themselves into a frenzy by the invocation of "Allah! Allah!" until the words themselves are lost in inarticulate gasps; as Eastern Christians will recite the "Kyrie eleison," the "Gospidi Pomilou," in a hundred-fold repetition; as the pilgrims round the Church of St. John at Samaria formerly, and round the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre now, race, and run, and tumble, in order to bring down the Divine Fire into the midst of them¹ — so the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal (for the prophets of Ashtaroath seem to have shrunk from the contest) performed their wild dances round their altar, or upon it, springing up, or sinking down, with the fantastic gestures which Orientals alone can command, as if by an internal mechanism, and screaming with that sustained energy which believes

¹ *Sinai and Palestine*, Chap. xiv.

that it will be heard from its much speaking — from morn till noon, “*Hear us, O Baal, hear us.*” A larger spirit of Christian insight, or Christian compassion, either perceives under these desperate forms of superstition some elements of a nobler faith, or else is oppressed, even to tears of pity, by the thought of this dark abyss of human corruption. But there is a ludicrous side, on which, in this instance, the Biblical narrative fixes our attention, in one of those bursts of laughter, which form rare exceptions in the Hebrew annals, and which when they do occur need special notice. There is, for the moment, a savage humor, a biting sarcasm, in the tone of Elijah, which forms an exception alike to the general humanity of the New Testament and the general seriousness of the Old. He had already, in addressing the assembled people, placed before them in one sharp truculent question the likeness, it might almost be said the caricature, of their stumbling, hesitating gait: “How long are you “to halt and totter,¹ first on one knee, and then on the “other? If Jehovah be your God, walk straight after “Him; if Baal, walk straight after him!” It was the very action and gesture, represented in the grotesque dances,² first on one foot and then on another, round the Pagan altars. And now the ridicule grows keener and stronger. It is noon, when gods and men under that burning sun may be thought to have withdrawn to rest. And “Elijah the Tishbite”³ (so he is described in his full human personality) cannot restrain himself, and cheers them on, — “Cry with a loud voice, louder “and louder yet, for he is a god; for he has his head

¹ 1 Kings xviii. 21 (Heb. and LXX.). See Ewald, iii. 492.

² 1 Kings xviii. 26 (Heb.). See Thenius.

³ Ibid. 27 (LXX.).

“full, and is too busy to hear your prayer; or perchance he has his stomach¹ full, and has gone aside into retirement; or perchance in the heat of the day he is asleep, and must be awakened.” The prophets of Baal took Elijah at his word. Like the Dervishes, who eat glass, seize living snakes with their teeth, throw themselves prostrate for their mounted chief to ride over them; like the Corybantian priests of Cybele; like the Fakîrs of India, — they now, in their frenzied state, tossed to and fro the swords and lances which formed part of their fantastic worship, and gashed themselves and each other, till they were smeared with blood; and mingled with their loud yells to the silent and sleeping divinity those ravings which formed the dark side of ancient prophecy. The mid-day heat is now passed; the altar still remains untouched; even fraud, if there were fraud, has been unsuccessful.² And now comes the contrast of the calmness and tranquillity of the true Prophet. Elijah bade the hostile prophets³ stand aloof, and called the people round him. He was standing amidst the ruins of the ancient altar. With his own hands he gathered twelve stones from its fragments. The sacred character of the northern kingdom, as representing the twelve tribes of “Israel,” the ancient Patriarchal Israel, was not forgotten. These twelve sacred blocks were piled up; the sacrifice duly prepared; the water brought from the adjacent well. And then as the hour of the evening sacrifice drew near, and as the sun began to

¹ So may be kept up the play on the curious words *sig* and *siach* (ver. 27), untranslatable into English. (See Thenius on the passage.)

² An old tradition maintained that a man put inside the altar to kindle

the fire died of the suffocation. Ephrem Syr. *Comm.* ad loc.; Chrysostom, in *Petrum Apost. et Eliam Proph.* i. 765.

³ 1 Kings xviii. 30 (LXX.).

descend towards the western sea, with no frantic gesticulation or vain reiteration, he sent up into the evening
 Elijah's heaven¹ four short cries to the God of his
 prayer. fathers: — "JEHOVAH, the God of Abraham,
 "Isaac, and Jacob, hear me :

"JEHOVAH : hear me this day in fire, and LET all this
 "people know that *Thou* art JEHOVAH, the God of Israel,
 "and *I* am Thy servant, and through Thee I have done
 "all these things.

"Hear me, O JEHOVAH :

"Hear me, and let this people know that *Thou*,
 "JEHOVAH, art the God, and that *Thou* hast turned their
 "hearts back again."²

On the open mountain-top (this is the effect of the sacred narrative), and to the few words needing not more than a few seconds to utter, the answer came which had been denied to the vast concourse of prophets, to their many hours of eager application and self-inflicted torture. It was the difference between the vain and unmeaning superstition of fanatics, "which availeth nothing," and the effectual fervent prayer of one righteous man,³ "which availeth much." "Then "fell fire from JEHOVAH from heaven."⁴

There is an exultant triumph in the words in which
 The sacri- the sacred historian describes the completeness
 fice. of the conflagration. The fragments of the ox
 on the summit of the altar first disappear; then the pile
 of wood, heaped from the forests of Carmel; next the
 very stones of the altar crumble in the flames; then
 the dust of the earth that had been thrown out of the
 trench; and lastly, the water in the deep trench round

¹ ἀνεβοήσεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, 1 Kings
 xviii. 36 (LXX.).

³ James v. 16.

⁴ 1 Kings xviii. 38 (LXX.).

² 1 Kings xviii. 37 (LXX.).

the altar is licked up by the fiery tongues, and leaves the whole place bare. The altar itself had been an emblem "of the tribes of the sons of Israel." Its envelopment in this celestial fire was an emblem no less of the reconstruction of the kingdom,—a token that "the God of Israel had turned their heart back again." So for the moment it seemed. "JEHOVAH, *HE* is God! JEHOVAH, *HE* is God!" was the universal cry; as if, turning (by a slight inversion) the name of the Prophet himself into a war-cry, "Eli-Jah-hu," — "*My God, He is Jehovah.*" Before him the whole multitude lay prostrate on the mountain-side. He was now the ruler of the nation. His word was law. In that sudden revulsion of feeling "the wheel" The massacre. "had come full cycle round." The persecutors became the victims. The prophets of Baal were seized; they were swept away by the wild multitude. Elijah himself led them down the mountain-slopes to the gorge of the Kishon. As Phinehas, as Samuel, before him, so Elijah now took upon himself the dreadful office of executioner. Sword¹ in hand he stood over the unresisting prophets, and in one swift and terrible slaughter they fell by the sacred stream.² The name of the "Hill of the Priests" possibly commemorates their end.

On the peaceful top of the mountain the sacrificial feast was spread, and to this, at Elijah's bidding, the King went up; for already in the Prophet's The storm. inward ear there was "the sound of the tread of rain."³ At "the top of the mountain," but on a lower declivity,⁴ Elijah bent himself down, with his head, in the Oriental attitude of entire abstraction, placed between his knees;

¹ 1 Kings xviii. 40; xix. 1.

³ 1 Kings xviii. 41 (LXX.).

² For the general principle of this act, see Lecture XI.

⁴ This appears from the words "go up" in xviii. 43, 44.

whilst his attendant boy mounted to the highest point of all, whence, over the western ridge, there is a wide view of the blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea. The sun must have been now gone down. But the cloudless sky would be lit up by the long bright glow which succeeds an Eastern sunset. Seven times the youthful watcher ascended and looked; and seven times "there was nothing." The sky was still clear; the sea was still calm. At last out of the far horizon there arose a little cloud, the first that for days and months had passed across the heavens; and it grew in the deepening shades of evening, and quickly the whole sky was overcast, and the forests of Carmel shook in the welcome sound of those mighty winds which in Eastern regions precede a coming tempest. Each from his separate height, the King and the Prophet descended. The cry of the boy from his mountain watch¹ had hardly been uttered when the storm broke upon the plain; and the torrent of Kishon began to swell. The King had not a moment to lose lest he should be unable to reach Jezreel. He mounted his chariot at the foot of the hill. And Elijah was touched as by a supporting hand; and he snatched up his streaming mantle and twisted it round his loins, and, amidst the rushing storm with which the night closed in, he outstripped even the speed of the royal horses, and "ran before the chariot"—as the Bedouins of his native Gilead would still run, with inexhaustible strength—to the entrance of Jezreel, distant, though visible, from the scene of his triumph.

The story of Elijah, like the story of Athanasius, is full of sudden reverses. The prophets of Baal were destroyed; Ahab was cowed. But the ruling spirit of the hierarchy and of the kingdom remained undaunted;

¹ 1 Kings xviii. 44 (Heb.). See Thenius.

Jezebel was not dismayed. With one of those tremendous vows which mark the history of the Semitic race, both within and without the Jewish pale, — the vow of Jephthah, the vow of Saul, the vow of Hannibal, — she sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “As surely as thou art Elijah, and I am Jezebel, so may God do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life to-morrow, about this time, as the life of one of them.”¹

The Prophet who had confronted Ahab and the national assembly trembled² before the implacable Queen. It was the crisis of his life. One only out of that vast multitude remained faithful to him, — the Zidonian boy of Zarephath, as Jewish tradition believed, the future Jonah. With this child as his sole companion, he left the border of Israel, and entered — so far as we know for the first and only time — the frontier of the rival kingdom. But he halted not there. Only an apocryphal tradition points out the mark of his sleeping form, on a rock half-way between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.³ He reached the limit of the Holy Land. At Beersheba⁴ he left his attendant youth, and thence plunged into the desert. Under a solitary⁵ flowering broom of the desert, he lay down to die. “It is enough; now, O JEHOVAH, take away my life; for *I* am not better than my fathers.” It is the desponding cry of many a gallant spirit, in the day of disappointment and desertion. But, once and again, an unknown messenger,⁶ or an angelic visitant, gave him sustenance and comfort; and “in the strength of that

Flight to
Horeb.

¹ 1 Kings xix. 2 (LXX.).

² Ibid. 3 (LXX.).

³ See ELIJAH, in *Dict. of Bible*, i. 528, note.

⁴ The addition “which longeth to Judah” seems almost to indicate

that the narrative is from an *Israelite* historian.

⁵ “One *retem*-tree” (1 Kings xix. 4, 5, Heb.).

⁶ 1 Kings xix. 5, 7; Heb. *maleac*, a messenger, and hence an angel; LXX. *τίς*.

“meat he went forty days and forty nights” across the platform of the Sinaitic desert, till he came “to the “mount of God, to Horeb.” It is the only time, since the days of Moses, that the course of the Sacred History brings us back to those sacred solitudes. Of pilgrims, if any there were, to those early haunts of Israel, Elijah’s name alone has come down to us. In “*the cave*” (so it is called, whether from its being the usual resort, or from the fame of this single visit)—in the cave, well-known then, though uncertain now, Elijah passed the night.¹ There is nothing to confirm, but there is nothing to contradict, the belief that it may have been in that secluded basin, which has been long pointed out as the spot, beneath the summit of what is called “the Mount of Moses.” One tall cypress stands in the centre of the little upland plain. A ruined chapel covers the rock on which the Prophet is believed to have rested, on the slope of the hill. A well and tank, ascribed to him, are on the other side of the basin. The granite rocks enclose it on every side, as though it were a natural sanctuary. No scene could be more suitable for the vision which follows. It was, if not the first Prophetic call to Elijah, the first Prophetic manifestation to him of the Divine Will and the Divine Nature. It was a marked crisis not only in his own life, but in the history of the whole Prophetic Dispensation.

He is drawn out by the warning, like that which came to Moses on the same spot, and stands on the mountain-side, expecting the signs of the Divine Presence. He listened; and there came the sound of a rushing hurricane, which burst through the mountain wall and rolled down the granite rocks in massive fragments round him. “But JEHOVAH was not “in the wind.” He stood firm on his feet, expecting it

Vision of
Horeb.

¹ 1 Kings xix. 9 (Heb.). See Ewald.

again; and under his feet the solid mountain shook, with the shock of a mighty earthquake. "But JEHOVAH "was not in the earthquake." He looked out on the hills as they rose before him in the darkness of the night; and they flamed with flashes of fire, as in the days of Moses. "But JEHOVAH was not in the fire." And then, in the deep stillness of the desert air—unbroken by falling stream, or note of bird, or tramp of beast, or cry of man—came the whisper, of a voice as of a gentle breath¹—of a voice so small that it was almost like silence. Then he knew that the moment was come. He drew, as was his wont, his rough mantle over his head; he wrapt his face in its ample folds; he came out from the sheltering rock, and stood beneath the cave to receive the Divine communications.

They blended with the vision; one cannot be understood without the other. They both alike contain the special message to Elijah, and the universal message to the Universal Church. Each is marked and explained by the Divine question and the human answer, twice repeated: "What doest thou here, Elijah: thou, the "Prophet of Israel, here in the deserts of Arabia?"—"I have been very jealous for JEHOVAH, the God of hosts: "because the children of Israel have forsaken Thy "covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy "prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; "and they seek my life, to take it away." He thinks that the best boon that he can ask is that his life should be taken away. It is a failure, a mistake; he is not better than his fathers. Such is the complaint of Elijah, which carries with it the complaint of many a devout heart and gifted mind, when the world has turned against them, when their words and deeds have been

¹ Kings xix. 12 (LXX.).

misinterpreted, when they have struggled in vain against the wickedness, the folly, the stupidity of mankind. But the answer to them is contained in the blessing on independence. It is the blessing on Athanasius against the world; it is the encouragement to the angel Abdiel, — “Amongst the faithless, faithful “only he.” Resistance to evil, even in the desert solitude, is a new starting-point of life. He has still a task before him. “Go, return on thy way to the wilderness “of Damascus.” He is to go on through good report and evil; though his own heart fail him, and hundreds fall away. When he comes, he is to anoint Gentile and Hebrew, King and Prophet. His work is not over; it has but just begun. In the three names, Hazael, Jehu, Elisha, is contained the history of the next generation of Israel.

But the vision reaches beyond his own immediate horizon. It discloses to him the true relations of a Prophet to the world and to the Church. The Queen with fire and sword, the splendid temples of Jezreel and Samaria, the whole nation gone astray after her, seemed to be on one side; and the solitary Prophet, in the solitary wilderness, on the other side. So it seemed; but so it was not. The wind, the earthquake, and the fire might pass over him. But God was not in them. Nor was He in the power and grandeur of the State or Church of Israel. Deep down in the heart of the nation, in the caves of Carmel, unknown to him, unknown to each other, are seven thousand, who had not, by word or deed, acknowledged the power of Baal. In them God was still present. In them was the first announcement of the doctrine, often repeated by later Prophets, of an “Israel within Israel,” — of a remnant¹ of good which

¹ See Lecture XXXVIII.

embraced the true hope of the future. It is the profound Evangelical truth, then first beginning to dawn upon the earth, that there is a distinction between the nation and the individual, between the outward divisions of sects or churches, and the inward divisions which run across them,—good in the midst of evil, truth in the midst of error, internal invisible agreement amidst external visible dissension.

It is further a revelation to Elijah, not only concerning himself and the world, but concerning God also. He himself had shared in the outward manifestations of Divine favor which appear to mark the Old Dispensation,—the fire on Carmel, the storm from the Mediterranean, the avenging sword on the banks of the Kishon. These signs had failed; and he was now told that in these signs, in the highest sense, God was not; not in these, but in the still small gentle whisper of conscience and solitude was the surest token that God was near to him. Nay, not in his own mission, grand and gigantic as it was, would after-ages so clearly discern the Divine Inspiration, as in the still small voice of justice and truth that breathed through the writings of the later Prophets, for whom he only prepared the way,—Hosea, Amos, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah. Not in the vengeance which through Hazael and Jehu was to sweep away the House of Omri, so much as in the discerning Love which was to spare the seven thousand; not in the strong east wind that parted the Red Sea, or the fire that swept the top of Sinai, or the earthquake that shook down the walls of Jericho, would God be brought so near to man, as in the still small voice of the Child at Bethlehem, as in the ministrations of Him whose cry was not heard in the streets, in the awful stillness of the Cross, in the never-failing order of Providence, in the silent insensible

influence of good deeds and good words, of God and of man. This is the predictive element of Elijah's prophecies. This is the sign that the history of the Church had made a vast stride since the days of Moses. Here we see, in an irresistible form, the true unity of the Bible. The Sacred narrative rises above itself to a world hidden as yet from the view of those to whom the vision was revealed. There is already a Gospel of Elijah. He, the furthest removed of all the Prophets from the Evangelical spirit and character, has yet enshrined in the heart of his story the most forcible of all protests against the hardness of Judaism, the noblest anticipation of the breadth and depth of Christianity.

From this, the culminating point of Elijah's life, we are carried abruptly to the renewal of his personal history and his relations with Ahab.

It is characteristic of the Sacred History that the final doom of the dynasty of Omri should be called forth, not by its idolatry, not by its persecution of the Prophets, but by an act of injustice to an individual, a private citizen.

On the eastern slope¹ of the hill of Jezreel, immediately outside the walls, was a smooth plot of ground, which Ahab, in his desire for the improvement of his favorite residence, wished to turn into a garden² of herbs or flowers. But it belonged to Naboth, a Jezreelite of distinguished birth,³ who sturdily refused, perhaps with something of a religious scruple, to part with it for any price or equivalent: "JEHOVAH forbid that I should give to thee the inheritance of my

Naboth's
vineyard.

¹ Its situation is fixed by 2 Kings ix. 30-36, compared with 1 Kings xxi. 1, 19, 23. The LXX. version of 1 Kings xxi. 1 (in both Vat. and Alex. MSS.) changes "Jezreelite"

into "Israelite," "palace" into "threshing-floor," and omits the words which "was in Jezreel."

² As distinct from a *park* of trees.

³ Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 13, § 8.

“fathers.” The rights of an Israelite landowner were not to be despised. The land had descended to Naboth, possibly, from the first partition of the tribes. Omri, the father of Ahab, had given a great price for the hill of Samaria to its owner Shemer. David would not take the threshing-floor on Moriah, even from the heathen Araunah, without a payment. The refusal brought on a peculiar mood of sadness,¹ described on two occasions in Ahab and in no one else. But in his palace there was one who cared nothing for the scruples which tormented the conscience even of the worst of the Kings of Israel. In the pride of her conscious superiority to the weaknesses of her husband, “Jezebel came to him “and said, Dost thou now govern² the kingdom of Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be “merry, *I* will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the “Jezreelite.” It is the same contrast — true to nature — that we know so well in Ægisthus and Clytemnestra, in Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, where the feebler resolution of the man has been urged to the last crime by the bolder and more relentless spirit of the woman. She wrote the warrant in Ahab’s name; she gave the hint to the chiefs and nobles of the city. An assembly was called, at the head³ of which Naboth, by virtue of his high position, was placed. There, against him, as he so stood, the charge of treason was brought according to the forms of the Jewish law. The two or three⁴ necessary witnesses were produced, and sate before him. The sentence was pronounced. The whole family were

¹ “Heavy and displeased,” 1 Kings xx. 43; xxi. 4.

² Ποιεῖς βασιλεία (LXX.).

³ This (according to Josephus, *Ant.*

viii. 13, § 8) is the explanation of Naboth “was set on high.”

⁴ Deut. xvii. 6; xix. 15. Josephus says there were three witnesses; the Hebrew and LXX. two.

involved in the ruin. Naboth and his sons, in the darkness of the night,¹ were dragged out from the city. According to one biblical account,² the capital was the scene; and in the usual place of execution at Samaria, by the side of the great tank or pool (here as at Hebron³), Naboth and his sons were stoned; and the blood from their mangled remains ran down into the reservoir, and was licked up on the broad margin of stone by the ravenous dogs which infest an Eastern capital, and by the herds of swine⁴ which were not allowed to enter the Jewish city. "Then they sent to Jezebel saying, Naboth is stoned and is dead." And she repeated to Ahab all that he cared to hear: "Naboth is not alive, but is dead." The narrative wavers in its account of his reception of the tidings. The more detailed version of the Septuagint tells us that, immediately, the pang of remorse shot through his heart. "When he heard that Naboth was dead, he rent his clothes and put on sack-cloth." But this was for the first moment only. From the capital of Samaria, as it would seem, he rose up, and went down the steep descent which leads into the plain of Jezreel. He went in state, in his royal chariot. Behind him, probably in the same chariot,⁵ were two of the great officers of his court; Bidkar, and one whose name afterwards bore a dreadful sound to the House of Ahab,—Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi. And now they neared the city of Jezreel; and

¹ This is to be inferred from the word *emesh*, "yesternight," used in 2 Kings ix. 26. See *Dict. of the Bible*, i. 529, note.

² 1 Kings xxi. 19. (LXX.)

³ 2 Sam. iv. 12.

⁴ 1 Kings xxii. 38 (LXX.), compared with xxi. 19. According to Josephus, it was in his own city of

Jezreel that the trial took place, and the execution was by the spring of Jezreel. See Lectures XV. and XXI.

⁵ So Josephus, *Ant.* ix. 6, § 3, καθεζόμενος : 2 Kings ix. 25, *tsemadim* (as a "yoke" of animals). The LXX. makes them in separate chariots, ἐπὶ τὰ ζεύγη.

now the green terraces appeared, which Ahab at last might call his own, with no obstinate owner to urge against him the claims of law and of property; and there was the fatal vineyard, the vacant plot of ground waiting for its new possessor. There is a solitary figure standing on the deserted ground, as though the dead Naboth had risen from his bloody grave to warn off the King from his unlawful gains. It is Elijah. As in the most pathetic of Grecian dramas, the unjust sentence has no sooner been pronounced on the unfortunate Antigone, than Tiresias rises up to pronounce the curse on the Theban king, so, in this grander than any Grecian tragedy, the well-known Prophet is there to utter the doom of the House of Ahab. He comes, we know not whence. He has arisen; he has come down at the word of the LORD to meet the King, as once before, in this second crisis of his life. Few and short were the words which fell from those awful lips; and they are variously reported. But they must have fallen like thunderbolts on that royal company. They were never forgotten. Years afterwards, long after Ahab and Elijah had gone to their account, two of that same group found themselves once again on that same spot; and a king, the son of Ahab, lay dead at their feet; and Jehu turned to Bidkar and said, "Remember "how that thou and I rode behind Ahab his father, "when the Lord laid this burden upon him. Surely "yesternight I saw the blood of Naboth and the blood "of his sons, saith JEHOVAH, and I will requite thee in "this plat, saith JEHOVAH."¹ And not only on that plat, but wherever the House of Ahab should be found, and wherever² the blood of Naboth had left its traces, the decree of vengeance was pronounced; the horizon was

The curse
on Ahab.

¹ 2 Kings ix. 26.

² 1 Kings xxi. 19 (LXX.).

darkened with the visions of vultures glutting on the carcasses of the dead, and the packs of savage dogs feeding on their remains, or lapping up their blood. — All these threats the youthful soldier heard, unconscious that he was to be their terrible executioner. But it was on Ahab himself that the curse fell with the heaviest weight. He burst at once into the familiar cry, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" The Prophet and the King parted, to meet no more. But the King's last act was an act of penitence; on every anniversary¹ of Naboth's death he wore the Eastern signs of mourning. And the Prophet's words were words of mercy. It was as if the revelation of "the still small voice" was becoming clearer and clearer. For in the heart of Ahab there was a sense of better things, and that sense is recognized and blessed.

It was three years afterwards that the first part of Elijah's curse, in its modified form, fell on the royal house. The scene is given at length, apparently to bring before us the gradual working-out of the catastrophe. The Syrian war, which forms the background of the whole of the history of Omri's dynasty, furnishes the occasion. To recover the fortress of Ramoth-Gilead is the object of the battle. The Kings of Judah and Israel are united for the grand effort. The alliance is confirmed by the marriage of Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, with Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat.² The names of the two royal families are intermixed for the first time since the separation of the kingdoms. Jehoshaphat comes down in state to Samaria. A grand sacrificial

The attack
on Ramoth-
Gilead.

¹ 1 Kings xxi. 27 (LXX.). "Went softly," is probably "went barefoot" (Josephus).

² 2 Kings viii. 18, 26.

feast for him and his suite¹ is prepared. The two kings, an unprecedented sight, sit side by side, each on his throne, in full pomp,² in the wide open space before the gateway of Samaria. Once again, though in a less striking form, is repeated the conflict between the true and false prophesyings, as at Carmel. Four hundred prophets of Baal, yet evidently professing the worship of JEHOVAH, and Israelites,³ not foreigners — all, in one mystic chorus, urged the war. One only exception was heard to the general acclamation; not Elijah, but one who, according to Jewish⁴ tradition, had once before foretold the fall of Ahab, — Micaiah, The vision of Micaiah. the son of Imlah. In the vision which he describes, we feel that we are gradually drawing nearer to the times of the later Prophets. It is a vision which might rank amongst those of Isaiah, or of Ezekiel. On earth, the Prophet sees the tribes of Israel, scattered on the hills of Gilead, like sheep who have lost their shepherd; and he hears a voice bidding them return each to their own homes, as best they can; for their human leader is gone — they have no help but in God.⁵ Above, he sees the God of Israel on His throne, as the kings on their thrones before the gate of Samaria. His host, as theirs, is all around Him. There is a glimpse into the truth, so difficult of conception in early ages, that even the Almighty works by secondary agents. Not by Himself, but by one or other of His innumerable host; not by these indiscriminately, but by one, to whom is given the name of “The Spirit.”⁶ Not by

¹ 2 Chr. xviii. 2.

² 1 Kings xxii. 10; 2 Chr. xviii. 9 (LXX. and Ewald).

³ See the name Zedekiah, “justice of Jehovah” (ver. 11), and the constant mention of the name of Jehovah (5, 6, 11, 12). Possibly the 400

prophets of Ashtaroth (“the groves”) who escaped destruction at Carmel. Compare 1 Kings xviii. 19 with 22.

⁴ 1 Kings xx. 35, with the comment of Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 14, § 5.

⁵ 1 Kings xxii. 17 (LXX.).

⁶ 2 Chr. xviii. 20 (Heb.).

any sudden stroke of vengeance, but by the very network of evil counsel which he has woven for himself, is the King of Israel to be led to his ruin. The imagery of the vision of Micaiah is the first germ of the Prologue of Job, and conveys the same exalted glance into the unseen guidance of good and evil, by the same overruling Hand. In contrast with this one sublime Prophet is the vulgar advocate of the popular view of the moment, Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah. He also is the first of a type that we meet frequently afterwards, — one filled with the spirit of false prophecy, not from any false doctrine, but from narrow or interested motives, leaning on the feeblest auguries, the most accidental tokens. According to Josephus,¹ he relied on Elijah's prediction that Ahab's blood should be shed on the spot which had received the blood of Naboth, and that therefore he could not fall in battle. His imagery, too, was like that which prevailed among the later Prophets, — a parable, not of words, but of action. He took horns of iron, with which, as with the horns of the wild bull of Ephraim,² he would push the enemies of Ephraim to the ends of the earth. He struck Micaiah on the face, with the challenge,³ according to Jewish tradition, to wither his hand, as that of Jeroboam had withered at the command of Iddo.

In the battle that follows under the walls of Ramoth-Gilead,⁴ everything centres on this foredoomed destruction of Ahab. All his precautions are baffled. Early in the day, an arrow, which later tradition ascribed to the hand of Naaman, pierced the King's

The death
of Ahab.

¹ *Ant.* viii. 15, § 4.

² *Deut.* xxxiii. 17.

³ *Joseph. Ant.* viii. 15, § 5.

⁴ This is implied in 1 Kings xxii. 20, 29, but is stated distinctly in Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 15, § 6.

breastplate. He felt his death-wound; but, with a nobler spirit than had appeared in his life, he would not have it disclosed, lest the army should be discouraged. The tide of battle rose higher¹ and higher till nightfall. The Syrian army retired to the fortress.² Then, and not till then, as the sun went down, did the herald of the army proclaim: "Every man to his city, and every man to his country, *for the King is dead.*"³

The long-expected event had indeed arrived. The King, who had stood erect⁴ in the chariot till that moment, sank down dead. His body was carried home to the royal burial-place in Samaria. But the manner of his end left its traces in a form not to be mistaken. The blood which all through that day had been flowing from his wound, had covered both the armor in which he was dressed and the chariot in which he had stood for so many hours. The chariot (perhaps the armor) was washed in state — according to one version⁵ in the tank of Samaria, according to another⁶ in the spring of Jezreel. The bystanders remembered that the blood, shed as it had been on the distant battle-field, streamed into the same waters which had been polluted by the blood of Naboth and his sons, and was lapped up from the margin by the same dogs and swine, still prowling round the spot; and that when the abandoned outcasts⁷ of the city — probably those who had assisted in the profligate rites of the Temple of Ash-taroath — came, according to their shameless usage, for

1 1 Kings xxii. 35 (Heb.).

2 Joseph. *Ant.* viii. 15, § 6.

3 1 Kings xxii. 36 (LXX.).

4 Ibid. 35 (LXX.).

5 1 Kings xxii. 38 (Heb. and LXX.).

6 Joseph. *Ant.* viii. 15, § 6.

7 1 Kings xxii. 38 (Heb. and LXX.). Joseph. *Ant.* viii. 15, § 6, "The harlots washed themselves" (or washed the chariot), for "they washed the armor." See Keil and Thenius.

their morning¹ bath in the pool, they found it red with the blood of the first apostate King of Israel.

So were accomplished the warnings of Elijah and Micaiah. So ended what may be called the first part of the tragedy of the House of Omri.

¹ Ὑπὸ τὴν ἑω. Procopius, *ad loc.*

LECTURE XXXI.

THE HOUSE OF OMRI. — ELISHA.

WITH the fall of Ahab a series of new characters appear on the eventful scene. Elijah still remained for a time, but only to make way for successors. In the meeting of the four hundred Prophets at Samaria, he was not present. In the reign of Ahaziah and of Jehoram, he appears but for a moment. There was a letter, the only written prophecy ascribed to him, and the only link which connected him with the history of Judah, addressed to the young Prince who reigned with his father Jehoshaphat¹ at Jerusalem. There was a sudden apparition of a strange being, on the heights of Carmel, to the messengers whom Ahaziah had sent to consult an oracle in Philistia.² They were passing, probably, along the "haunted strand," between the sea and the mountain. They heard the warning voice. They returned to their master. Their description could apply only to one man; it must be the wild Prophet of the desert whom he had heard described by his father and grandfather. Troop after troop was sent to arrest the enemy of the royal house, to seize the lion in his den. On the top of Carmel they saw the solitary form. But he was not to be taken by human force; stroke after stroke

Last appearance of
Elijah on
Carmel.

¹ This is a possible explanation 12-15. Comp. 2 Kings i. 17; viii. of the letter to *Jehoram*, 2 Chr. xxi. 16.

² 2 Kings i. 3-17.

of celestial fire was to destroy the armed bands. They retired, and he disappeared. It was to this act, some centuries afterwards, not far from the same spot, that the two ardent youths appealed, and provoked that Divine rebuke which places the whole career of Elijah in its fitting place,¹ as something in its own nature transitory, precursive, preparatory.

Another was now to take his place. The time was come when “the Lord would take Elijah into The ascension of Elijah. “heaven by a tempest.” Those long wanderings were now over. No more was that awful figure to be seen on Carmel, nor that stern voice heard in Jezreel. For the last time he surveyed, from the heights of the western Gilgal,² the whole scene of his former career, — the Mediterranean Sea, Carmel, and the distant hills of Gilead, — and went the round of the consecrated haunts of Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho.³ One faithful disciple was with him, — the son of Shaphat, whom he had first called on his way from Sinai to Damascus, and who, after the manner of Eastern attendants, stood by him to pour water over his hands in his daily ablutions. With that tenderness which is sometimes blended with the most rugged natures, at each successive halt the older Prophet turned to his youthful companion, and entreated him to stay: “Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath “sent me to Bethel . . . to Jericho . . . to Jordan.” But in each case Elisha replied with an asseveration, that expressed his undivided and unshaken trust in his master and in his master’s God: “As the Lord liveth, “and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.” At Bethel, and at Jericho, the students in the schools that

¹ See Lecture XXX.

nius *ad loc.* and Robinson, *Bib. Res.* ii.

² Gilgal here is possibly the modern

265.)

Jerusalem, near Seilân. (See The-

³ 2 Kings ii. 1-5.

had gathered round those sacred spots, came out with the sad presentiment that for the last time they were to see the revered instructor who had given new life to their studies ; and they too turned to their fellow-disciple : “ Knowest thou not that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day ? ” And to every such remonstrance he replied with emphasis, “ Yea, *I* know it ; hold ye your peace. ” No dread of that final parting could deter him from the mournful joy of seeing with his own eyes the last moments, of hearing with his own ears the last words, of the Prophet of God. “ And they two went on. ” They went on alone. They descended the long weary slopes that led from Jericho to the Jordan. On the upper terraces, or on the mountain-heights behind the city, stood “ afar off, ” in awe, fifty of the young disciples ; “ and they two stood by Jordan. ” They stood by its rushing stream ; but they were not to be detained by even this barrier. “ The aged Gileadite cannot rest till “ he again sets foot on his own side of the river. ” He ungirds the rough mantle from around his shaggy frame ; he “ rolled it together, ” as if into a wonder-working staff ; he “ smote ” the turbid river, as though it were a living enemy ; and the “ waters divided “ hither and thither, and they two went over on dry ground. ” And now they were on that farther shore, under the shade of those hills of Pisgah and of Gilead, where, in former times, a Prophet, greater even than Elijah, had been withdrawn from the eyes of his people — whence, in his early youth, Elijah had himself descended on his august career. He knew that his hour was come ; he knew that he had at last returned home ; that he was to go whither Moses had gone before him ; and he turned to Elisha to ask for his last

wish. One only gift was in Elisha's mind to ask: "I pray thee, let a double portion — if it be only two morsels,¹ two thirds — of thy spirit be upon me, the right of thy first-born son."

It was a hard thing that he had asked. But it was granted, on one condition. If he was able to retain to the end the same devoted perseverance, and keep his eye, set and steadfast, on the departing Prophet, the gift would be his. "And as they still went on," — upwards, it may be, towards the eastern hills, talking as they went, — "behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder." This was the severance of the two friends.

Then came a furious storm. "And Elijah went up in the tempest² into heaven." In this inextricable interweaving of fact and figure, it is enough to mark how fitly such an act closes such a life. "My father, my father," Elisha cried, "the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." So Elijah had stood a sure defence to his country against all the chariots and horsemen that were ever pouring in upon them from the surrounding nations. So he now seemed, when he passed away, lost in the flames of the steeds and the car that swept him from the earth, as in the fire of his own unquenchable spirit — in the fire which had thrice blazed around him in his passage through his troubled earthly career. According to the Jewish legends, he was at his birth wrapped in swaddling-bands of fire, and fed with flames.³ During the whole of his course, "he rose up as a fire, and his word blazed as a torch."⁴ And as in its fiery

¹ This (and not "double thy spirit") seems to be the sense, by comparing it with Deut. xxi. 17; see Mr. Grove on ELISHA, *Dict. of Bible*, p. 535 note.

² 2 Kings ii. 11 (Heb., LXX.).
ἐν συσσεισμῷ ὡς εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν.

³ Legend quoted by Krummacher.

⁴ Eccclus. xlviii. 1.

force and energy, so in its mystery, the end corresponded to the beginning. He had appeared in the history, we know not whence, and now he is gone in like manner. As of Moses, so of Elijah, — “no man knoweth his sepulchre; no man knoweth his resting-place until this day.” On some lonely peak, or in some deep ravine, the sons of the Prophets vainly hoped to find him, cast away by the Breath of the Lord, as in former times. “And they sought him three days, but found him not.” He was gone, no more to be seen by mortal eyes; or, if ever again, only in far-distant ages, when his earthly likeness should once again appear¹ in that same sacred region, or when, on the summit of “a high mountain, apart by themselves,” three disciples, like Elisha, should be gathered round a Master whose departure they were soon expecting; “and there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Him.”² The Ascension³ or Assumption of Elijah stands out, alone in the Jewish history, as the highest representation of the end of a great and good career; of death as seen under its noblest aspect, — as the completion and crown of the life which had preceded it, as the mysterious shrouding of the departed within the invisible world. By a sudden stroke of storm and whirlwind, or, as we may almost literally say of the martyrs of old, by chariots and horses of fire, the servants of God pass away. We know not where they rest; we may search high and low, in the height of the highest peak of our speculations, or in the depth of the darkest shadow of the valley of death. Legend upon legend⁴ may gather round them, as upon Elijah; but

¹ Matt. iii. 4, 5; xi. 14; xvii. 11,
13.

² Ibid. xvii. 3.

³ Its traditional day is July 20
(see the *Acta Sanctorum*).

⁴ See Lecture XXX.

the Sacred Record itself is silent. One only mode or place there is where we may think of them, as of Elijah, — in those who come afterwards in their power and spirit, or in that One Presence which still brings us near to them, in the Mount of the Transfiguration, in communion with the Beloved of God.

The close of the career of Elijah is the beginning of the career of Elisha. It had been when he was The call of Elisha. ploughing, with a vast array of oxen before him, in the rich pastures of the Jordan valley, that Elijah swept past him. Without a word, he had stripped off the rough mantle of his office, and thrown it over the head of the wondering youth. Without a moment's delay he had stalked on, as if he had done nothing. But Elisha had rushed after the Prophet, and had obtained the playful permission to return for a farewell to his father and mother, in a solemn sacrificial feast, and had then followed him ever since. He had seen his master to the end. He had uttered¹ a loud scream of grief as he saw him depart. He had rent asunder his own garments, as in mourning for the dead. The mantle which fell from Elijah was now his. From that act and those words has been drawn the figure of speech which has passed into a proverb for the succession of the gifts of gifted men. It is one of the representations by which, in the Roman Catacombs, the early Christians consoled themselves for the loss of their departed friends. With the mantle he descends once more to the Jordan-stream, and wields it in his hand. The waters (so one version of the text represents² the scene) for a moment hesitate: "they divided not." He invokes the aid of Him, to whose other holy names he adds the new epithet of "The God of Elijah;" and then the

¹ 2 Kings ii. 12 (Heb.).

² 2 Kings ii. 14 (LXX.).

waters "part hither and thither," and he passes over and is in his own native region. In the western valley of the Jordan, in the gardens and groves of Jericho, now fresh from its recent restoration, he takes up his abode, as "the lord" of his new disciples. They see at once that "the spirit of Elijah rests upon Elisha," and they "bow themselves to the ground before him."

A long career of sixty years now opens before us, which serves to bring out the general features¹ of his relations to his predecessor. The succe-
Contrast
with Elijah.
sion was close and immediate, but it was a succession not of likeness but of contrast. The whole appearance of Elisha revealed the difference. The very children laughed when they saw the change, and watched the smooth well-shorn² head of the new and youthful Prophet going up the steep ascent, where last they had seen the long shaggy locks streaming down the shoulders of the great and awful Elijah. The rough mantle of his master appears no more after its first display. He uses a walking-staff, like other grave citizens.³ He was not secluded in mountain-fastnesses, but dwelt in his own house⁴ in the royal city; or lingered amidst the sons of the Prophets, within the precincts of ancient colleges, embowered amidst the shade of the beautiful woods which overhang the crystal spring that is still associated with his name;⁵ or was sought out by admiring disciples in some tower on Carmel, or by the pass of Dotham;⁶ or was received

¹ Any chronological arrangement of Elisha's life is impossible. In the account of his miracles, it is usually "the King of Israel" that is mentioned without names. In two instances at least (2 Kings viii. 1-6 and xiii. 14-21, which respectively precede 2 Kings v. 27 and xiii. 13), there has been a complete dislocation of the narrative.

² Such is the meaning of the word in 2 Kings ii. 23-25.

³ 2 Kings iv. 29; comp. Zech. viii. 4.

⁴ 2 Kings v. 9, 24; vi. 32; xiii. 17.

⁵ The *Ain es-Sultân*, near Jericho, often called Elisha's Spring. 2 Kings ii. 18-22; vi. 1.

⁶ 2 Kings iv. 25; vi. 14.

in some quiet balcony, overlooking the plain of Esdraelon, where bed and table and seat had been prepared for him by pious hands.¹ His life was not spent, like his predecessor's, in unavailing struggles, but in widespread successes. He was sought out not as the enemy but as the friend and counsellor of kings. One king² was crowned at his bidding, and wrought all his will. Another consulted him in war, another, on the treatment of his prisoners, another, in the extremity of illness, another, to receive his parting counsels.³ "My father," was their reverent address to him.⁴ Even in far Damascus, as we shall see, his face was known. Benhadad treats him with filial respect; Hazael trembled before him; Naaman hung on his words as upon an oracle.⁵ If for a moment he shows that the remembrance of the murder of Naboth and the prophets of Ahab and Jezebel is burnt into his soul,⁶ yet he never actively interposes to protest against the idolatry or the tyranny of the Court. Even in the revolution of Jehu he takes no direct part. Against the continuance of the worship of Baal and Ashtarothe, or the revival of the Golden Calves, there is no recorded word of protest. There is no express teaching handed down. Even in his oracular answers there is something uncertain and hesitating. He needs the minstrel's harp to call forth his peculiar powers,⁷ as though he had not them completely within his own control. His deeds were not of wild terror, but of gracious, soothing, homely beneficence, bound up with the ordinary tenor of human life. When he smites with blindness, it is that he may re-

¹ 2 Kings iv. 8, 10.

² Jehu. 2 Kings ix. 1, 2, 6-10.

³ Ibid. iii. 11-19; vi. 21; viii. 8;
xiii. 14-19.

⁴ 2 Kings vi. 21; xiii. 14.

⁵ Ibid. viii. 7, 8, 11-13; v. 18

⁶ Ibid. iii. 13.

⁷ Ibid. iii. 15.

move it again ; when he predicts, it is the prediction of plenty, and not of famine.¹ The leprosy of Gehazi is but as the condition of the deliverance of Naaman. One only trait, and that on the very threshold of his career, belongs entirely to that fierce spirit of Elijah which called down Our Lord's rebuke, — when he cursed the children of Bethel for their mockery.² The act itself, and its dreadful sequel, are as exceptional in the life of Elisha as they are contrary to the spirit of the Gospel.³ At his house by Jericho the bitter spring is sweetened ; for the widow of one of the prophets (traditionally of Elijah's friend)⁴ the oil is increased ; even the workmen at the prophets' huts are not to lose the axe-head which has fallen through the thickets of the Jordan into the eddying stream ;⁵ the young prophets, at their common meal, are saved from the deadly herbs which had been poured from the blanket of one of them into the caldron ; and enjoy the multiplied provision of corn.⁶ At his home in Carmel he is the oracle and support of the neighborhood ; and the child of his benefactress is raised to life, with an intense energy of sympathy that gives to the whole scene a grace as of the tender domestic life of modern times.⁷ And when, at last, his end comes, in a great old age, he is not rapt away like Elijah, but buried with a splendid funeral ;⁸ a sumptuous tomb was shown in after ages over his grave, in the royal city of Samaria ; and funeral dances were cele-

¹ 2 Kings vi. 18–20 ; vii. 1.

² Ibid. ii. 23, 24.

³ See the contrast drawn between the cruelty of Elisha and the mercy of St. James of Nisibis in Theodoret (*Philothous*, iii. 1111).

⁴ The Jewish tradition identifies the woman of 1 Kings iv. 1–7 with

the widow of Obadiah (see *Targum* on the passage, and Josephus, *Ant.* ix. 4, § 2).

⁵ 2 Kings vi. 5–7.

⁶ Ibid. iv. 38–44.

⁷ Ibid. iv. 27–37.

⁸ Josephus, *Ant.* ix. 8, § 6.

brated round his honored resting-place.¹ Alone of all the graves of the saints of the Old Testament, there were wonders wrought at it, which seemed to continue after death the grace of his long and gentle life. It was believed that by the mere touch of his bones a dead corpse was reanimated.² In this, as in so much beside, his life and miracles are not Jewish but Christian. His works stand alone in the Bible in their likeness to the acts of mediæval saints. There alone in the Sacred History the gulf between Biblical and Ecclesiastical miracles almost disappears.³ The exception proves the general rule; still it is but just to notice the exception.

Such was Elisha, greater yet less, less yet greater, than Elijah. He is less. For character is the real Prophetic gift. The man, the will, the personal grandeur of the Prophet are greater than any amount of Prophetic acts, or any extent of Prophetic success. We cannot dispense with the mighty past, even when we have shot far beyond it. Nations, churches, individuals, must all be content to feel as dwarfs in comparison with the giants of old time, — with the Reformers, the Martyrs, the Heroes of their early youthful reverence. Those who follow cannot be as those who went before. A Prophet like Elijah comes once, and does not return. Elisha, both to his countrymen and to us, is but the successor, the faint reflection of his predecessor. When he appeared before the three suppliant kings, his chief honor was that he was “Elisha the son of Shaphat, who “poured water on the hands of Elijah.”⁴

Less, yet greater. For the work of the great ones of

¹ Jerome, *Comm. on Obad.* i. 1; Benedict and St. Bernard, which are the same in character, only far more numerous.

² 2 Kings xiii. 21.

³ Compare especially those of St. ⁴ 2 Kings iii. 11.

this earth is carried on by far inferior instruments but on a far wider scale, and, it may be, in a far higher spirit. The life of an Elijah is never spent in vain. Even his death has not taken him from us. He struggles, single-handed as it would seem, and without effect; and in the very crisis of the nation's history is suddenly and mysteriously removed. But his work continues; his mantle falls; his teaching spreads; his enemies perish. The Prophet preaches and teaches, the martyr dies and passes away; but other men enter into his labors. By that one impulse of Elijah, Elisha and Elisha's successors, Prophets and sons of Prophets, are raised up by fifties and by hundreds. They must work in their own way. They must not try to retain the spirit of Elijah by repeating his words, or by clothing themselves in his rough mantle, or by living his strange life. What was begun in fire and storm, in solitude and awful visions, must be carried on through winning arts, and healing acts, and gentle words of peaceful and social intercourse; not in the desert of Horeb, or on the top of Carmel, but in the crowded thoroughfares of Samaria, in the gardens of Damascus, by the rushing waters of Jordan. Elisha himself may be as nothing compared with Elijah; his wonders may be forgotten. He dies by the long decay of years; no chariots of fire are there to lighten his last moments, or bear away his soul to heaven. Yet he knows that, though unseen, they are always around him. Once in the city of Dothan, in the ancient pass, where the caravans of the Midianites and the troops of the Syrians stream through into Central Palestine, — when he is compassed about with the chariots and horses of the hostile armies, and his servant cries out for fear, Elisha said, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than

“they that be with them. . . . And, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”¹ It is a vision of which the meaning acquires double force from its connection with the actual history; as if to show, by the very same figure, that the hope which bore Elijah to his triumphal end was equally present with Elisha. Elijah, and those who are like Elijah, are needed, in critical and momentous occasions, to “prepare the way for the Lord.” His likeness is John the Baptist; and of those that were born of women before the times of Christendom none were “greater than they.” But Elisha, and those who are like Elisha, have a humbler, and yet a wider, and therefore a holier sphere; for their works are not the works of the Baptist, but are the deeds, if not of Christ Himself, at any rate of “the least in His kingdom,” — the gentle, beneficent, “holy man of God, who passeth by us continually.”²

¹ 2 Kings vi. 16, 17.

² 2 Kings iv. 9.

LECTURE XXXII.

THE HOUSE OF OMRI.—JEHU.

As Elisha had succeeded Elijah, so it would seem as if Gehazi was to have succeeded Elisha. He ^{Gehazi.} was "the servant of the man of God."¹ He bore the wonder-working staff. "He stood before" his master as a slave.² He introduced strangers to the Prophet's presence.³ He was "the dear heart" of the Prophet's affection.⁴ But, as has so often happened in like successions of the Christian Church, in the successors of St. Francis, of Ignatius Loyola, and of John Wesley, the original piety and vigor have failed in the next generation. There was a coarse grain in the servant which parted him entirely from his master. He and his children were known, in after-times, only as the founders of a race of lepers, bearing on their foreheads the marks of an accursed ancestry.⁵

There was another successor, not less unequal and unlike, already designated by Elijah himself. With Elisha and Hazael, in the vision at Horeb, ^{The call of Jehu.} had been named Jehu, the son or grandson of Nimshi.⁶ Years had rolled away since his meeting with Elijah in the vineyard of Naboth. He was now high in the favor of Ahab's son, as captain of the host in the Syrian war. In that war of chariots and horses, he had

¹ 2 Kings iv. 12, 29. The word is *na'ar*, "attendant," not *ebed*, "slave."

² Ibid. v. 25.

³ Ibid. iv. 12, 15.

⁴ See Ewald on 2 Kings v. 26.

⁵ Comp. 2 Kings v. 27.

⁶ 1 Kings xix. 16. His full pedigree is given in 2 Kings ix. 2.

acquired an art little practised by the infantry of the ancient Israelites. He was known through the whole army and country for driving his horses, like one out of his mind.¹

The army which he commanded was at Ramoth-Gilead. That was still the point round which the interest of the Syrian war revolved. The King himself had been present at the siege, had been in personal danger, and had returned home to Jezreel to be cured of his wounds² from the arrows of the Syrian archers. It was in his absence that a young man—said by tradition³ to be the future prophet Jonah, son of the widow of Zarephath—arrived at the camp, with a small flask⁴ in his hand. His garments were girt round him as of one travelling in haste, and his appearance was wild and excited, as of a madman. From the midst of the captains he singled out Jehu. The soldier and the youth withdrew into the house, in front of which they were sitting. Through the house they went from chamber to chamber, till they reached the most secret recess.⁵ The officers remained outside in anxious expectation. Presently the door of the house opened, and the youth rushed out and disappeared as suddenly as he had appeared. Then Jehu himself came forth. He put off their eager inquiry for a moment. “Ye know the man and his meditations;” as much as to

¹ The same word as in 2 Kings ix. 11. So LXX., *ἐν παραλλαγῇ*. But the Targum and Josephus, *Ant.* ix. 6, § 3, “slowly.”

² 2 Kings ix. 14, 15; 2 Chr. xxii. 5, 6. For the archers see LXX. of latter passage, and Josephus, *Ant.* ix. 6, § 1.

³ *Seder Olam*, cap. 18, with the notes of Meyer, 933, 934.

⁴ 2 Kings ix. 1, 3. Only used here and in 1 Sam. x. 1; in each case the Hebrew definite article is used—“the oil,” namely, the sacred oil. So Joseph. *Ant.* ix. 6, § 1.

⁵ *Kheder* is always “the inner chamber.” This (ix. 2) is “the inner chamber of inner chambers.”

say, "You know¹ as well as I do, that this mysterious "visitor was no other than a prophet, coming and "going, after the manner of Elijah." With an abruptness which gives a touch of military life to the whole transaction, they replied, "It is a lie; tell us now." Then he broke his reserve, and revealed the secret interview. It had, indeed, been a messenger from Elisha, to fulfil the long-impending mission of Elijah. Once more there was a consecrated king of Israel. The oil of inauguration had been poured on the head of Jehu. He was to go forth "the anointed of the Lord," to exterminate the house of Ahab.² It was as if a spark had been set to a train long prepared. There was not a moment's hesitation. The officers tore off their military cloaks, and spread them under his feet, where he stood on the top of the stairs³ leading down into the court. As he stood on this extempore throne, with no seat but the steps covered by the carpeting of the square pieces of cloth, they blew the well-known blast of the ram's horn which always accompanied the inauguration of a king of Israel.

From this moment the course of Jehu is fixed. The destiny long brooding over him—the design perhaps raised in his own mind, from the day when he had first met Elijah—is to be accomplished. "If it be your minds, let none go forth, nor escape out

The march
of Jehu.

¹ Josephus (*Ant.* ix. 6, § 2) renders it, "Your words show that you know—for his message was, indeed, that of a madman."

² 2 Chr. xxii. 7; 2 Kings ix. 7.

³ The expression translated on the "top of the stairs is one of which we have lost the clew. The word is *gerem*, i. e. a 'bone,' and the meaning appears to be that they placed Jehu on the very stairs themselves, without

any seat or chair below him. The stairs doubtless ran round the inside of the quadrangle of the house, as they do now, for instance, in the ruin called the house of Zacchæus at Jericho—and Jehu sat where they joined the flat platform which formed the top or roof of the house. Thus he was conspicuous against the sky, while the captains were below him in the quadrangle."—*Dict. of Bible*, art. JEHU.

“of the city to go to tell it in Jezreel.” The secrecy was to be preserved till the last moment. He mounted his chariot; he armed himself with his bow¹ and quiver. A large part of the army followed him. They crossed the Jordan, and up the wide opening of the valley between Little Hermon and Gilboa, they advanced upon Jezreel. Twice² over we are told, not without a certain pathos, that the King of Israel lay sick in Jezreel of the wounds that he had received in the battles of his country, and that his nephew, the King of Judah, had come to visit him in his sick-chamber. They were startled by the announcement of the sentinel—who stood always on the high watch-tower³ of Jezreel looking towards the east—that the dust⁴ of a vast multitude was seen advancing from the Jordan valley. The first apprehension must have been of a Syrian invasion, or of a Syrian alliance. Two horsemen were successively sent out to bring information, but, according to his plan, were detained by Jehu, so as to secure the suddenness of his arrival; till at last, as the cavalcade drew nearer, the sentinel on the watch-tower recognized, by the furious speed of the foremost horses, that the charioteer could be no other than Jehu, the Mad Driver. Joram, still apparently filled with the thought of the Syrian war, roused himself from his sick-bed, and, accompanied by his nephew, went out to meet the captain of his host. Arrival at
Jezreel. Jehu had halted, in his onward march, at a well-known spot, close under the walls of Jezreel. They “found” him in the fatal plot of Naboth’s ground. He was determined to receive them there.

¹ 2 Kings ix. 24.

² Ibid. viii. 28; ix. 15.

³ An old square tower still remains.

See Ritter, *Palest.* 414; perhaps *Migdol*.

⁴ 2 Kings ix. 17 (LXX.).

Then, in answer to Joram's question, "Is it peace, Jehu?" he revealed his purpose. It was the great Queen-mother, the mighty Jezebel, that was the main object of his attack. Joram wheeled his chariot round and fled. An arrow from Jehu's bow pierced his back. He fell in the chariot; and Jehu, with a grim reference to Elijah's prophecy, delivered on that very spot, bade his chief officer, Bidkar, throw the lifeless carcass on the ground, and leave it for the vultures and dogs.¹ The King of Judah meantime had fled far down the western plain. The accounts of his death vary. He endeavored to escape by the Pass of Engannim; but the arrows of the pursuers struck him also, though not fatally, near the ascent to a well-known caravan-serai,² which caused him to change his route. According to Josephus,³ he left his chariot, and rode on horseback to Megiddo. Here his strength failed. According to the Chronicles,⁴ he contrived to reach Samaria, and lay there concealed, till he was dragged out, probably some days later, and killed in cold blood.

Jehu was now near the gates of Jezreel. The palace overhung the walls, and looked down on the dreadful scene of guilt and of retri-^{The death of Jezebel.} bution. There was one spirit in the house of Ahab still unbroken. The aged Queen-mother tired her head and painted her eyelids⁵ with lead-ore, to give them a darker border and a brighter and larger appearance, and looked through the high latticed window of the watch-tower.⁶ The supreme hour of her dynasty and of her life was come; and as Jehu's chariot rolled up

¹ 2 Kings ix. 26. Ephrem Syrus reads it, "for yesternight I saw" (*i. e.* in a dream) "the blood of Naboth and his sons" — omitting "the Lord said."

² The "going up to Gur."

³ *Ant.* ix. 6, § 3.

⁴ 2 Chr. xxii. 9.

⁵ 2 Kings ix. 30 (Heb.).

⁶ Joseph. *Ant.* ix. 6, § 4.

the ascent, she cast her thoughts back to the days when Omri, the founder of her dynasty, had trampled down the false usurper Zimri. It is difficult to know whether her words were spoken in stern rebuke or bitter irony, "Had Zimri peace who slew his lord?"¹ or "Welcome to Zimri,² the slayer of his lord." The savage conqueror looked up.³ His words, too, are variously handed down: "Who art thou?" — "Come down to me;" or "Who is on my side, who?"⁴ Two eunuchs here, three there, looked out at his call, and dashed⁵ the Queen down from the window. She fell between the palace and the advancing chariot. The blood flew up against the wall and over the horses, as they trampled her down under their hoofs. The conquering procession drove through the gateway, and sate down to a triumphal feast.⁶ Not till the feast was over did a spark of feeling rise within the breast of Jehu at the fall of so much grandeur. He bade his servants go out and bury the woman, who, with all her crimes, was yet the daughter of a king. But it was too late. The body had been left on the "mounds," as they are called in Eastern stories, where the offal is thrown outside the city gates. The wild dogs of Jezreel, prowling then as now around the walls, had done their work; only the harder parts of the human frame remained, — the skull, the hands, and the feet.⁷ It is this dreadful scene which is so well caught in Racine's tragedy of "Athalie," where the daughter of Jezebel recounts the dream in which her mother's ghost appeared to her: —

¹ Or, "Is it peace, O Zimri, slayer of his lord" (Keil, *Comment.*).

² So Joseph. *Ant.* ix. 6, § 4, *κάλος* δουλός, &c.

³ Joseph. *Ibid.*

⁴ Joseph. *Ibid.* and LXX.

⁵ 2 Kings ix. 33.

⁶ *Ibid.* ix. 34.

⁷ *Ibid.* 34-37; comp. Ps. cxli. 7.

Ma mère Jézabel devant moi s'est montrée,
 Comme au jour de sa mort, pompeusement parée.
 Ses malheurs n'avaient point abattu sa fierté,
 Même elle avait encore cet éclat emprunté
 Dont elle eut soin de peindre et d'orner son visage,
 Pour reparer des ans l'irréparable outrage . . .
 Son ombre vers mon lit a paru se baisser,
 Et moi je lui tendis les mains pour l'embrasser,
 Mais je ne l'ai plus trouvé qu'un horrible mélange
 D'os et de chair meurtris et traînés dans la fange,
 Des lambeaux pleins de sang et des membres affreux,
 Que des chiens dévorans disputaient entr' eux.¹

Every stage of Jehu's progress was thenceforth marked with blood, yet still under the same March on Samaria. overruling self-control. After the fall of Jezreel, he marched on to the capital, Samaria. Of seventy young princes who were awaiting his arrival there he secured the destruction, by a bold challenge which threw the responsibility on the chief minister.² Half-way between Jezreel and Samaria was a well-known shearing-house, or other resort of shepherds; here he executed forty-two members of the royal family of Judah, who had started from Jerusalem, perhaps on the rumor of the revolution at Jezreel. In a well, close by, as at Cawnpore, they were all slaughtered. It was immediately after this that he came across a figure, who might have reminded him of Elijah himself. It was Jehonadab. Jehonadab the son of Rechab,—that is, the son of the “Rider,”—an Arab chief of the Kenite tribe, who was the founder or second founder of one of those Nazarite communities which had grown³ up in the kingdom of Israel, and which in this instance combined a kind of monastic discipline with the manners of the Bedouin race from whom they were descended.⁴ It

¹ Act II. Scene 5.

³ Amos ii. 11.

² 2 Kings x. 3.

⁴ 1 Chr. ii. 55; Jer. xxxv. 6, 7.

seems that he and Jehu were already known to each other.¹ The King was in his chariot; the Arab was on foot. It may be that the house of “the shepherds”² (as the place of their meeting was called) was a usual haunt of the pastoral chief. It is not clear which was the first to speak. The Hebrew text implies that the King gave his blessing to Jehonadab.³ The Septuagint and Josephus imply that Jehonadab blessed the King. The King knew the stern tenacity of purpose that distinguished Jehonadab and his tribe: “Is thy heart right with my heart, as my heart is with thy heart?” The answer of Jehonadab is slightly varied. In the Hebrew text, he replies vehemently, “It is, it is — give me thy hand.” In the Septuagint,⁴ he replies simply, “It is,” and then Jehu with his wonted caution, rejoins, “If it is, give me thy hand.” The hand, whether of Jehonadab or Jehu, was grasped in a clasp which was not afterwards parted. The King lifted him up to the edge of the chariot, apparently to whisper into his ear the first indication of the religious revolution which he had determined to make with the political revolution already accomplished. Side by side with the King, the austere Hermit sate in the royal chariot as he entered the capital of Samaria, “the warrior in his coat of mail, the ascetic in his hair-cloth.”⁵

After the few remaining adherents or members of the house of Ahab were put to death, it might have seemed that the throne of Jehu was established, and the massacres stayed. Nothing had yet been done beyond what might be necessary for the extinction of the reigning dynasty. The temple of Ashtarothe had

The massacre at Samaria.

¹ Joseph. *Ant.* ix. 6, § 6.

² Beth-eked (translated “the shearing-house”).

³ In Josephus, Jehonadab blesses Jehu; see Keil, *ad loc.*

⁴ Followed by the English Version.

⁵ Dr. Pusey on Amos, p. 176.

been left standing at Jezreel ;¹ the temple of Baal was still standing in Samaria. To Jehonadab alone had the King whispered his zeal for JEHOVAH. To all the rest of Israel he could say, "Ahab served Baal a little ; but "Jehu shall serve him much." A splendid festival was announced in the temple at Samaria ; the whole heathen population of Israel was summoned ; the sacrifices were ready ; the sacred vestments were brought out ; all the worshippers of Baal were there ; all the servants of Jehovah, as unworthy of the sacred mysteries, were excluded.² The King himself was the first to enter, and offer the victims to the heathen gods. There was nothing in that unmoved countenance to betray the secret. Even the King and the Anchorite were able to the last moment to preserve the mask of conformity to the Phœnician worship. They completed³ their sacrifice, and left the temple. Round about the building were eighty men, consisting of the King's own immediate officers and body-guard. They were intrusted with the double charge, first of preventing the escape of any one, and, secondly, of striking the deadly blow. They entered, and the temple was strewn with corpses, which, as fast as they fell, the guards and the officers threw out with their own hands. At last, when the bloody work was over, they found their way to the inner sanctuary, which towered like a fortress above the rest. There, as we have seen,⁴ Baal was seated aloft, with the gods of Phœnicia round him. The wooden images, small and great, were dragged from their thrones and burnt. The pillar or statue of Baal which Joram had removed was also shattered. The temple was razed to the ground,

¹ 2 Kings xiii. 6.

³ 2 Kings x. 25 (LXX.).

² See Herodian, v. 5 ; Silius Ital.

⁴ See Lecture XXX.

iii. 20-27 (Ewald, iii. 532).

and its site only known in after-days as the depository of all the filth of the town.¹

So ended this great revolution. The national worship of Baal was thus in the northern kingdom forever suppressed. For a short time, through the very circumstances which had destroyed it in Samaria, it shot up afresh in Jerusalem. But in Israel, the whole kingdom and church returned to the condition in which it was before the accession of the house of Omri. The calf-worship of Jeroboam was once more revived, and in that imperfect form the True Religion once more became established.

The character of Jehu is not difficult to understand, if we take it as a whole, and consider the general impression left upon us by the Biblical account. He is exactly one of those men whom we are compelled to recognize, not for what is good or great in themselves, but as instruments for destroying evil and preparing the way for good; such as Augustus Cæsar at Rome, Sultan Mahmoud II. in Turkey, or one closer at hand in the revolutions of our own time and neighborhood. A destiny, long kept in view by himself or others — inscrutable secrecy and reserve in carrying out his plans — a union of cold remorseless tenacity with occasional bursts of furious, wayward, almost fanatical, zeal: this is Jehu, as he is set before us in the historical narrative, the worst type of a son of Jacob, — the “supplanter,” as he is called,² without the noble and princely qualities of Israel, — the most unlovely and the most coldly commended of all the heroes of his country.³

¹ 2 Kings x. 27.

² Ibid. x. 19, “in subtilty” (Heb.).

³ Except that “*all* his might” is applied to him alone of all the Kings of Israel (2 Kings x. 31).

We may remember the poem in the “*Lyra Apostolica*,” —

Thou to wax fierce

In the cause of the Lord ;

and the striking passage of Racine, —

Jéhu, sur les hauts lieux enfin osant offrir

Un temeraire encens que Dieu ne peut souffrir,

N’a pour servir sa cause et venger ses injures

Ni le cœur assez droit ni les mains assez pures.¹

And it is a striking instance of the gradually increasing light, even in the Jewish Dispensation, that in the wider and more evangelical revelations of the later Prophets, the commendation on Jehu’s acts is repealed. It is declared, through the voice of Hosea, that for the blood even of Jezebel and Ahaziah an account must be rendered : “I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the “house of Jehu.”² Their blood, like the blood which has been shed again and again, in the convulsions of Nations and Churches, was a righteous retribution on them ; but from him who shed it a no less righteous retribution is at last exacted, by the just judgment which punishes the wrong-doer, not only of one party in Church or State, but of both.

And the accursed spot of the ancient dynasty, the very title and site of Jezreel seemed to draw down upon itself a kind of Divine compassion. The innocent child of the Prophet was to bear the name of Jezreel, and “the bow” of Jehu’s house “was to be broken” . . . in the great “day of Jezreel.”³ It is the same touching thought of life growing out of death, which has so often forced itself on those who have seen the rich harvest

¹ *Athalie*, Act III. Scene 6.

cause he killed him.” Compare 1

² Hosea i. 4. So Baasha, though he has the Divine command to over-throw Jeroboam, is condemned “be-

Kings xv. 29 and xvi. 7.

³ Hos. i. 4, 5, 11.

springing up out of a battle-field, that out of that time and place of humiliation the name is to go back to its original signification as derived from the beauty and fertility of the rich plain, and to become a pledge of the revived beauty and richness of Israel. "I will hear and answer the heavens, and they will hear and answer the earth, and the earth shall hear and answer the corn and the wine and the oil of that fruitful plain, and they shall hear and answer *Jezreel* (that is, the seed of God), and I will *sow* her unto Me in the earth."¹ And from this time the image seems to have been continued as a prophetical expression for sowing the blessings of God, and the people of Israel, as it were broadcast; as though the whole of Palestine and the world were to become, in a spiritual sense, one rich plain of Jezreel.

¹ Hos. i. 4, 5, 11; ii. 22 (Heb.); see Ewald, *Propheten*, ad loc., and Gesenius, art. "Jezreel."

LECTURE XXXIII.

THE HOUSE OF JEHU.

THE SYRIAN WARS, AND THE PROPHET JONAH.

WITH the overthrow of the house of Omri, the main interest of the history of Samaria is brought to an end. The long struggle was finished, and the good cause, in however imperfect a form, and by instruments however rude, triumphed at last. The scenes of that struggle have been described as they are given in the sacred narrative itself, not softening any of their horrors, nor extenuating their intense charm. Ulphilas, the apostle of the Goths, and author of the first version of the Scriptures in the German languages, omitted from his translation the Books of Kings, lest descriptions like these should rouse or confirm the savage spirit of the barbarian tribes. It is an advantage of our more civilized times, that we can now read these interesting narratives without any such fear. They are not Christian; they belong to that state of crude morality which our Lord condemned.¹ But as illustrations of the Jewish Church, and as masterpieces of the historical art, if I may so say, of the Hebrew Scriptures, they are invaluable.

Of the less important period of the House of Jehu, the Syrian wars form the main outward framework. Down to the time of the disruption of the kingdom, the people of Israel had on the whole maintained its inde-

¹ Matt. v. 27, &c. See Lecture XI.

pendence of foreign powers. Its contests and alliances had for the most part been with the nations inclosed within the limits of Palestine. The conquests of David, the commerce of Solomon, had not entangled them in any close political relations with the more distant of the surrounding nations. But the separation of the two kingdoms made each of them a more easy prey, and the riches acquired during the empire, previously united, excited the ambition of the neighboring countries, now that the strong hand of David and Solomon was removed.

Damascus, as soon as it threw off the yoke of Judah, became naturally the capital of the new Aramaic kingdom thus formed. "Aram (Syria) of Damascus" was the title by which it was known, to distinguish it from those which had preceded it at Zobah, Hamath, or other places in the highlands of the north of Palestine. Rezon, the outlaw, was its founder.¹ Hader or Hadad, and Rimmon, were the chief divinities of the race, and from them the line of its kings derived their names, — Hadad, Ben-hadad, Hadad-ezer, Tabrimmon;² and sanctuaries in their honor were established even in the heart of Palestine.³

How entirely the Syrian wars belonged to the northern, and not to the southern kingdom, appears from the fact that the first incursion, which ended in the devastation of the rich country round the sources of the Jordan, by Benhadad, was at the direct instigation of the King of Judah.⁴ This seems to have been temporary. But in Omri's reign the demands of Syria were bolder. "Cities" were taken from him — amongst them Ramoth-

¹ 1 Kings xi. 23; perhaps also ³ Hadad-Rimmon. See Lecture called Hezion, 1 Kings xv. 18. LXX. XXXIX.

Esrom, Rason, Hazeel.

⁴ 1 Kings xv. 18-20.

² 1 Kings xv. 18.

Gilead and probably other fortresses on the eastern bank of the Jordan — and a quarter or bazaar, in the capital of Samaria, for settlers from Damascus.¹

Still more imperious demands were made on Ahab. His harem and his treasures were to be surrendered, and after them the treasures of his nobles. The army of Syria was so numerous, that the dust of Samaria, when it was ground to powder, would not fill their hands. The King of Syria treated the siege of Samaria as a pastime, — sitting with his subject kings in rural banquets, under leafy arbors, made for the occasion.² Two-and-thirty³ of these vassal chiefs followed Benhadad's camp, each with his chariots and horses. "Chariots and "horses" innumerable were the symbol of the strength of Syria. In spite of all the changes introduced by Solomon, the Israelites were still far inferior in this branch of military service. "The chariots⁴ and horse—"men and horses" passed almost into a proverb to express strength beyond their own.⁵ The Israelite host, with the allied army of Judah, encamped on their hill-sides, and overlooking the vast army of the Syrians in the plain below, were but like two little flocks of mountain kids.⁶ Another strong arm of war, although here the Israelites were more equally matched, was their archery. Twice over, an arrow from the Syrian bowmen decided the fate of battles.⁷

Ramoth-Gilead, the great frontier fortress, was in the hands of Syria, even after many reverses, a constant menace against Israel. As it was now

Ramoth-Gilead.

¹ 1 Kings xx. 34. Josephus, *Ant.* in Mr. Newman's *Hebrew Monarchy*, viii. 15, § 3, and see Thenius *ad loc.* p. 183.

² 1 Kings xx. 12-16.

⁵ 2 Kings ii. 11, 12; vi. 17; vii.

³ *Ibid.* xx. 1, 16; xxii. 31.

6; xiii. 14.

⁴ The advantage of chariots over

⁶ 1 Kings xx. 27.

infantry or even cavalry in the uninclosed plains of Syria is well given

⁷ *Ibid.* xxii. 34; 2 Chron. xxii. 5 (LXX. and Josephus).

the point of contention between Syria and Israel, so formerly it had been the frontier between the tribes of Laban and Jacob. A lofty watch-tower gave it the name of Mizpeh, and it was known from far as the rallying-place of the trans-Jordanic tribes, and the city of refuge for the Gadites. Campaign after campaign was formed against it. "Know ye that Ramoth-Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hands of the King of Syria?" was the standing remonstrance of the Kings of Israel.¹ "Shall I go up against Ramoth-Gilead, or shall I forbear?" was the standing question.² Ahab lost his life in trying to recover it; Joram received there the wounds which laid him long on a bed of sickness. There the captains of the host formed a separate community by themselves—from the protracted siege. The first question raised when a cloud of dust was seen approaching Jezreel from the east was, "Is it peace in Ramoth-Gilead?"³

Twice in Ahab's reign, and once in that of his son, the Syrians met with signal reverses, which saved the northern kingdom from utter extinction. The first was a panic in the Syrian camp, during the preparations against Samaria, occasioned by the sudden appearance of a body of young Israelite nobles. The second was the battle of Aphek.⁴ The victorious result was the more conspicuous from its being fought on the plain and not in the hills. Benhadad was reduced to beg for his life and kingdom, but was let off on easy terms, through the feeling of brotherhood even then existing among crowned heads.⁵

The most remarkable incident of the war was the

¹ 1 Kings xxii. 3.

² Ibid. xxii. 6, 15.

³ 2 Kings ix. 18; Josephus, *Ant.* ix. 6, § 3.

⁴ 1 Kings xx. 23.

⁵ Ibid. xx. 33.

siege of Samaria. It was the first of that succession of sieges which have left such awful scars on the history of Israel. Now for the first time, ^{Siege of Samaria.} but not for the last, was the dreadful curse fulfilled, contained in the ancient law,—“The tender and delicate woman devouring her own offspring.”¹ The surrounding hills were occupied by the Syrian army, who could watch the condition of the besieged city, reaching as it did down the slopes of the mountain of Samaria. Below was the house where Elisha held his councils; on the summit was the palace. On the broad wall the King passed to and fro, and received the complaints of the besieged. The sudden panic which delivered the city is the one marked intervention in behalf of the northern capital. No other incident could be found in the sacred annals so appropriately to express, in the church of Gouda, the pious gratitude of the citizens of Leyden for their deliverance from the Spanish army, as the miraculous raising of the siege of Samaria.

In the midst of these merely military and political movements there are four names which unite them to the religious history of the nation, — Elisha, Hazael, Jeroboam II., and Jonah.

Of Elisha we have already spoken at length, as the successor of Elijah, and as the supporter of the dynasty of Jehu. But there is another aspect of the Prophetical office in which he appears, and of which he is the first representative.

On the one hand he is the support and champion of his countrymen, in this time of their need, against their foreign enemies. He conveys to the King of Israel secret intelligence of all the movements of the Syrians. He takes up his abode in Samaria during the siege.

¹ Deut. xxviii. 56, 57; 2 Kings vi. 28; Lam. iv. 10; Joseph. *B. J.* vi. 3, § 4.

The nobles of the city hold their councils in his house. He is so identified with the resistance to the enemy, that, on hearing of the frightful effects of the famine, the King sends an executioner to behead him. He is the life and soul of the patriotic party in the invaded kingdom. The Syrian King finds that he is baffled in his schemes by constant revelations of them to the King of Israel through Elisha, who tells "the words "that he speaks in his bedchamber."¹ He is in this respect the forerunner of Micah and Isaiah. On the other hand, it is from his time that the Prophets of Israel appear as the oracles, as the monitors, not only of Israel but of the surrounding nations. The larger comprehensiveness, for which the way had been prepared in the reign of Solomon, was now beginning to show

Elisha the
the Proph-
et of Syria.

itself in this the most national of all their institutions. Elisha is the Prophet of the Syrians as well as of the Israelites. It is this feature of his character that is caught in the only notice of him contained in the New Testament: "There were many "lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, but "none were healed save Naaman the Syrian."² The incident of Naaman grows directly out of the relations of Israel with Syria. The plundering troops of Damascus have carried off a little slave. She retains her recollection of the great Prophet. The wife of Naaman tells him.³ The King of Israel trembles at the demand made upon him by his powerful neighbor to cure the general. Naaman (by tradition said to be the slayer⁴

¹ 2 Kings vi. 10, 12, 31, 32.

² Luke iv. 27.

³ 2 Kings v. 5 (LXX.).

⁴ Joseph. *Ant.* viii. 15, § 5. This allusion is the more remarkable as Josephus omits the whole story of

Naaman and Elisha. It may be the explanation of the otherwise singular expression, "*The Lord* had by him given deliverance unto Syria," 2 Kings v. 1. (See NAAMAN, in *Dictionary of Bible*.)

of Ahab) comes in the equipage characteristic of his country. He is furious at the exaltation of the turbid yellow stream of the Jordan above the crystal waters of Abana and Pharpar, the real "rivers" of Damascus. The Prophet, instead of claiming him as an exclusive convert, accords a gracious permission to perform the accustomed act of devotion to the Syrian god, Rimmon, even whilst acknowledging the supremacy of JEHOVAH. On another occasion, in the same gentle and catholic spirit, he will not allow the King of Israel to kill those whom he has not taken as prisoners of war: "Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master." ¹

He appears at Damascus itself.² He is there in the midst of the enemies of his country. But the fame of his Prophetic power disarmed their hostility and led to his meeting with the predestined Ruler of whom he had heard years before from his master Elijah. It was, according to the local tradition, at Hobah, four miles from Damascus, that the interview took place.³ The Prophet stood (so it is said) by the spot now marked as the grave of his exiled servant Gehazi. There he received the eager inquiry from the sick-bed of Benhadad; it was presented by Hazeal, at the head of a train of forty camels laden with the choicest gifts of Damascus. Nothing seemed too costly to win a favorable reply. What that reply was it is hard to say. Did the Prophet, according to one reading, deliver one unbroken message of death? Or did he, as seems more probable, but with changes of tone ⁴ and voice, which we

¹ 2 Kings vi. 8-23. The mercy of Elisha is brought out the more forcibly from its strong contrast with the fierce spirit of a nameless Prophet, as it would seem, of the older school (1 Kings xx. 35).

² 2 Kings viii. 7-15.

³ See *Sinai and Palestine*, ch. xii.

⁴ See Thenius, *ad loc.*

cannot now recover, deliver the double oracle, "Go and say to him Thou shalt live, thou shalt live; but the Lord hath showed to me that he shall die, that he shall die"? There is something in the tortuous reply not inconsistent with the ambiguous answers of Elisha on other occasions. It is one of his contrasts with the blunt abruptness of Elijah. It may be that he spoke of the double issue at stake in the sick-chamber of the King, and in the courtier's mind. But other thoughts than those of Benhadad's death or life pressed in upon his soul. He gazed earnestly on Hazael's face; saw his future elevation, and saw with it the calamities which that elevation would bring on his country. It is very rarely that the Prophets are overcome by their human emotions. They speak (and so Elisha did on this very occasion) as men speak who are constrained by some overruling power. But the evils which he now presaged were so awful, that the tears rushed into his eyes. It was the same foreboding of national calamity that had before expressed itself in his rebuke to Gehazi: "Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive-yards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants?"¹ Hazael himself stood astounded at the Prophet's message. He, insignificant as he seemed, a mere dog,² to be raised to such lofty power and do such famous deeds! But so it was to

¹ 2 Kings v. 26.

² It is a common error that Hazael expresses horror, in 2 Kings viii. 13, at the commission of so great a crime. Whether it was he who murdered Benhadad is itself doubtful. Whilst the general drift tends to fix the act on Hazael, the immediate context rather implies that it was the attendant: — "He put the thick mattress

on the King's face (as in the murder of Abbas Pasha), and *Hazael* reigned in his stead." But the answer to Elisha has no reference to this. It is (not "Is thy servant a dog," *i. e.* "so base as to do this?" but) "Is thy slave, so insignificant, a mere dog, worthy of such high elevation?" See Mr. Grove on ELISHA.

be. By his deed, or another's, the King died, not of his illness, but by an apparent accident in his bath; and Hazael was at once raised to the throne of Syria. Under him Damascus became again a formidable power. He, in spite of his humble anticipation of himself, turned out to be all that the Prophet had foretold, — “mighty and of great power.”¹ He was worshipped almost with divine honors by his own countrymen even at the time of the Christian era.² The revolution which had called Jehu away from the siege of Ramoth-Gilead, and which had broken the alliance between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, opened the way for his invasion of Palestine. The trans-Jordanic territory was laid waste, its strongholds burnt, its population massacred; and through the reign of Jehu's successor, the fortunes of Israel were depressed yet lower.

At last, the brighter day began to dawn. Already in the time of Jehoahaz there was a promise of a great deliverer.³ In the days of Joash, Elisha himself foresaw the first turn of the fortune which he had so mournfully predicted. The last scene of his life showed how deeply the Syrian war colored all his thoughts, as well as those of the King. When he was now struck with his mortal sickness, the ^{Meeting with Joash.} young Joash came to visit the aged seer who had placed his grandfather on the throne, and wept over his face, and lamented that he who had been his father, and who had been to him a defence against the chariots⁴ and horsemen of Syria, was now to depart. The Prophet roused himself from his sick-bed, and bade the King take the bow, — the favorite weapon

¹ 2 Kings xii. 17; xiii. 3.

² Josephus, *Ant.* ix. 4, § 6.

³ 2 Kings xiii. 4, 5.

⁴ See the paraphrase of Josephus, *Ant.* ix. 8, § 6.

of the chiefs of Israel, — and then through the window open towards the eastern quarter, whence the hostile armies of Syria came, the youthful King, with the aged hands of Elisha planted on his hands, shot¹ once, twice, thrice, upon the ground outside. The energy of the youth was not equal to the energy of the expiring Prophet. He ought to have gone on shooting till he had exhausted the quiver. It would have been a sign and pledge of the entire destruction of his enemies. But still the tide was turned. Thrice, according to the augury, was the victory gained on the scene of the former victory of Ahab, and the conquered territory of Israel was reconquered; and Joash was able to compare himself to the cedar of Lebanon, towering high above the thistles that grew, and above the wild beasts that wandered, under his shade. The battle of Bethshemesh opened the way for him to Jerusalem itself, and alone of all the Kings of Israel he returned captor and plunderer of the chief city of the rival kingdom.² But this was not all. Elisha was now gone; had he lived to see the successor of Joash, his dying wish would have been more than satisfied. The long-foretold deliverer at last arose, the greatest of all the Kings of Samaria. As if with a forecast of his future glory, he was named after the founder of the kingdom, —

Jeroboam II. Jeroboam II. We know little of Jeroboam's character or of his wars, except the results.

But the results were prodigious. The whole northern empire of Solomon was restored. Damascus was taken, and the dominion was once more extended northward to the remote Hamath at the source of the Orontes,³

¹ So Josephus.

² 2 Kings xiv. 8–15.

³ Ibid. xiv. 28; Amos vi. 14.

“Hamath, *of or for Judah.*” This last addition is explained in various ways: 1. formerly belonging to Judah; 2. for Judah; 3. read Zobah (Ewald, iii. 562, comparing 2 Chr. viii. 3); 4.

and southward to the valley of willows¹ which divided Moab from Edom.

Edom belonged to Judah, but Moab had been long dependent on Israel, and had owned its sub-
jection by paying immense herds of sheep and ^{Conquest of Moab.} lambs as its annual tribute to the northern kingdom.² It had broken through this custom after the death of Ahad; and as the troubles of Israel went on increasing, Moabite troops had made yearly incursions into the Israelite territory, and finally settled north of the Arnon within the Israelite territory. It was this tract which Jeroboam reconquered; and in regaining it, he seems to have poured in a host of Arab tribes who swept the rich land of Moab itself, and reduced it to entire submission. There was a dreadful record³ handed down to after-times, which turns on the horrors of the night when Moab fell or was to fall before some mighty conqueror: "In the night, Ar of Moab is laid waste and brought to silence; in the night, Kir of Moab is laid waste and brought to silence." The high-places, the streets, the extreme borders of the country resound with howlings and wailings. "The women are huddled together like frightened birds at the fords of the Arnon." The vineyards, and corn-fields, and pastures are destroyed by heathen tribes. The Prophet, whoever he be, is moved to tender pity

(as in the Syriac and other versions) omit the word.

¹ Isa. xv. 7; perhaps also Amos vi. 14.

² 2 Kings iii. 4.

³ It is preserved both in Isaiah and Jeremiah. That it is from an older prophet is distinctly stated by Isaiah (xvi. 13), "This is the word that the Lord spoke concerning Moab long

ago. But now," &c.; and so Jeremiah (xlviii. 47) still further applies it to his time. Ewald (*Propheten*, i. 231) believes it to be by a Prophet of Judah, on account of xvi. 1-5. Still more probable is the conjecture of Hitzig, identifying it with the prophecy of Jonah mentioned in 2 Kings xiv. 25.

at the sight, and hopes that, in the old ancestral connection with the house of David, Moab may yet be not too proud to seek a covert from the face of the spoiler.

It may be that this is the very prophecy by which Jeroboam's empire was inaugurated, "according to the word of the Lord, which He spoke by the hand of His servant Jonah, the son of Amittai."¹ This Prophet, who was to Jeroboam II. what Ahijah had been to Jeroboam I., and what Elisha had been to Jehu, though slightly mentioned in the history, has been already thrice brought before us in Jewish tradition, and conveys an instruction reaching far beyond his times. The child of the widow of Zarephath, the boy who attended Elijah to the wilderness, the youth who anointed Jehu, was believed to be the same as he whose story is related to us in the book of unknown authorship, of unknown date, of disputed meaning,² but of surpassing interest,—the Book of Jonah. Putting aside all that is doubtful, it stands out of the history of those wars and conquests with a truthfulness to human nature and a loftiness of religious sentiment that more than vindicate its place in the Sacred Canon. First look at the vivid touches of the narrative even in detail. We see the Prophet hasting down from the hills of Galilee to the one Israelite port of Joppa. He sinks into the deep sleep³ of the wearied traveller as soon as he gets on board after his hurried journey. The storm rises; the Tyrian sailors are all astir with terror and activity. They attack the unknown passenger with their "brief

¹ 2 Kings xiv. 25.

² The word "And," with which the book commences, indicates a different origin from that of the earlier Prophetical Books. It is elsewhere only

used at the commencement of the Books of Leviticus, Numbers, Joshua, Kings, Ezekiel, Baruch, and Maccabees.

³ Jonah i. 5 (Heb.).

“accumulated inquiries.” “Why hath this happened to us? What doest thou? Whence art thou? What is thy country? Of what people art thou?”¹ The good seamen, heathens as they are, struggle against the dreadful necessity which Jonah puts before them. They row with a force which seems to dig up the waves under their efforts. But higher and higher, higher and higher, the sea surges against them, like a living creature gaping for its prey. The victim is at last thrown in, and its rage ceases.² This is the first deliverance, and it is the Divine blessing on the honest hearts and active hands of “those that go down to the sea in ships, and do their business in great waters.”

Then comes the unexpected rescue of the Prophet. He vanishes from view for three long days and nights. One of the huge monsters which are described in the Psalms³ as always sporting in the strange sea, and which in the early Christian paintings is represented as a vast dragon, receives him into its capacious maw. His own hymn of thanksgiving succeeds. He seems to be in the depths of the unseen world; the river of the ocean whirls him round in its vast eddies; the masses of seaweed enwrap him as in grave-clothes; the rocky roots of the mountains as they descend into the sea appear above him, as if closing the gates of earth against his return.⁴ The mighty fish is but the transitory instrument. That on which the Prophet in his hymn lays stress is not the mode of his escape, but the escape itself.⁵

¹ All this is well brought out by Dr. Pusey on Jonah, pp. 251, 252.

² This is well given in Josephus, (*Ant.* ix. 10, § 2).

³ Ps. civ. 26.

⁴ Jonah ii. 3, 5, 6.

⁵ Unless we have previously determined the question, whether the Book of Jonah is intended by the sacred writer to be a literal history, or an

The third deliverance is that of Nineveh. The great city rises before us, most magnificent of all the capitals of the ancient world, — “great even unto God.”¹ It included parks, and gardens, and fields, and people, and cattle, within its vast circumference.² Twenty miles the Prophet penetrates into the city. He had still finished only one third of his journey through it. His utterance, like that of the wild Preacher in the last days³ of the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, is one piercing cry, from street to street and square to square. It reaches at last the King on his throne of state. The remorse for the wrong and robbery and violence of many generations is awakened.⁴ The dumb animals are included, after the fashion of the East, in the universal mourning, and the Divine decree is revoked.

Of this revocation, and of the lessons of the whole book, the concentrated force is contained in the closing scene. The Prophet sits in his rude

apologue founded on a history, — and the example of the Books of Job and Tobit strongly leads to the latter supposition, — “*tota hæc de pisce Jonæ disquisitio*,” as an old commentator observes, “*vana videtur atque inutilis*.” The explanations divide themselves into those of a strictly preternatural kind, — as that a fish was created for the occasion; or into the natural or semi-natural, — as that it was a ship or an inn bearing the sign of the whale; or that it was a shark (For this last hypothesis see all that can be collected in Dr. Pusey’s Commentary on JONAH.)

It is more to the point to observe how little importance is attached to the particulars of the incident by the

sacred narrative. Jonah’s psalm of thanksgiving, whilst it contains the most forcible description of the escape from drowning by shipwreck, has no allusion to the more marvellous escape from suffocation within the belly of the fish. Whether the story be literal or poetical, it would be equally appropriate for the use made of it in Matt. xii. 39; Luke xi. 29. Josephus (*Ant.* ix. 10, § 2) speaks of the transaction as a “story” (λόγος).

¹ Jonah iii. 3 (Heb.).

² See Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, 640.

³ See all this drawn out at length by Dr. Pusey on Jonah iii.

⁴ Nahum ii. 11.

hut outside the Eastern gate, under the shade of the broad leaves of the flowering shrub,¹ the rapid produce of the night. With the scorching blast of the early morning the luxuriant shelter withers away, and in his despairing faintness he receives the revelation of the Divine character, which is to him as that of the Burning Bush to Moses, or of the Vision on Horeb to Elijah, and which sums up the whole of his own history.

He has been shown to us as one of the older Prophetic school, denouncing, rebuking, moving to and fro, without fixed habitation, like Elijah, flying from kingdom to kingdom, as if on the wings of the wind. But both in his weaker and his stronger side he represents the rapid change which came over the Prophetic school of Israel at this epoch. In the wider scope of his movements, and the mild and catholic spirit which pervades the whole tenor, if not of his teaching, at least of his history, we trace the same transitions that have been already remarked from the fierce and exclusive Elijah to the gentle and comprehensive Elisha. From west and east alike the curtain has in his life been rent asunder. On the one side we have embarked, for the first time in the sacred history, on the stormy waters of the Mediterranean, in a ship bound for the distant Tarshish on the coast of Spain. On the other side, we traverse, for the first time, the vast desert, and find ourselves in the heart of the great Assyrian capital. Jonah is the first apostle, though involuntary and unconscious, of the Gentiles. The inspiration of the Gentile world is acknowledged in the prophecy of Balaam, its nobleness in the Book of Job, its greatness in the reign of Solomon. But its distinct claims on

¹ The *palma Christi*, or castor-oil tree.

the justice and mercy of God are first recognized in the Book of Jonah. It is the cry of the good heathen that causes the sea "to cease from her raging." It is the penitence of the vast population of the heathen Nineveh that arouses the Divine pity even for the innocent children and the dumb, helpless cattle.

And this lesson is still more forcibly brought out by contrast with the conduct of the Israelite Prophet, in whose timidity and selfishness is seen the same degeneracy that has already marked the descent from Elisha to Gehazi. He, indeed, is delivered, but "so as by fire." The tables are turned against him with a sublime irony which almost anticipates the Gospel teaching of "the first and the last," "the Pharisee and the Publican," "the elder and the younger son." It is not in his strength, but his weakness, that the strength of that Divine message is perfected, through which a lesson is delivered to the Pastors of every age. In the Prophet's despondency, which swerves aside from the heavy duty imposed upon him, many a coward spirit that shrinks from the call of truth and duty starts to see its true likeness. In the return of the tempest-tossed soul, *de profundis*, to the task which has now become welcome—in the long-sustained effort to which at last he winds himself up, is the same encouragement that was needed even by an Apostle,— "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" *Venio iterum Romam crucifigi*. But most of all is the warning thrust home in the rebuke to the narrow selfishness which could lament over the withering of his own bower, and yet complain that the judgment had not been carried out against the penitent empire of Nineveh. "More than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left," the Prophet had desired to see sacri-

ficed to his preconceived notions of the necessities of a logical theory, or to the destruction of his country's enemies. "It displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he "was very angry. I pray Thee, was not this my saying when I was yet in my country? . . . Therefore "take, I beseech Thee, my life from me; for it is better "for me to die than to live." Better (so it has often been said by Jonah's successors) to die, than that unbaptized infants should be saved — than that the reprobate should repent — than that God's threatenings should ever be revoked — than that the solemnity of life should be disturbed by the restoration of the thousands who have had no opportunity of knowing the Divine will — than that God should at last "be all "in all." He sate under the shadow of his booth, still hoping, believing for the worst, "till he might see what "would become of the city."

Most just was the application of this passage by an apostolic pastor to the harsh Calvinists of the last century, — "Get ye from under your parched gourd of 'reprobation:' let not your eye be evil because God is "good; nor fret, like Jonah, because the Father of mercies extends His compassion even to all the humbled "heathen of the great city of Nineveh."¹ And not to Calvinists only, but to all who would sacrifice the cause of humanity to some professional or theological difficulty is the startling truth addressed, "Doest thou well to be "angry? God repented of the evil that He had said "that He would do unto them, and He did it not." The foredoomed destruction of the wicked, the logical consistency of the Prophet's teaching, must go for nothing before the justice and "the great kindness" of God — before the claims even of the unconscious heathen chil-

¹ Fletcher of Madeley (*Essay on Truth*) in *Sermons*, ii. 552.

dren, of the repentant heathen king. Nineveh shall be spared, although the Prophet has declared that in forty days it shall be overthrown.¹

In the scorching blast that beat upon the head of Jonah, when he "fainted and wished himself to die," and with a sharp cry repeated, in the pangs of his own destitution, what he had before murmured only as a theological difficulty, the sacred narrative leaves him. In the popular traditions of East and West, Jonah's name alone has survived the Lesser Prophets of the Jewish Church. It still lives, not only in many a Mussulman tomb along the coasts and hills of Syria, but in the thoughts and devotions of Christendom. The marvelous escape from the deep, through a single passing allusion in the Gospel history, was made an emblem of the deliverance of Christ Himself from the jaws of death and the grave.² The great Christian doctrine of the boundless power of human repentance received its chief illustration from the repentance³ of the Ninevites at the preaching of Jonah. There is hardly any figure from the Old Testament which the early Christians in the Catacombs so often took as their consolation in persecution as the deliverance of Jonah on the sea-shore, and his naked form stretched out in the burning sun beneath

¹ How difficult it was even in the Jewish Church to understand that a prediction could be frustrated, appears from the consequences drawn in Tobit xiv. 4-8, from Jonah's warning. On the other hand, for the true character of Prophetic teaching, on which it is founded, see Lectures XX., XL.

² Matt. xii. 40. The difficulty of this verse is well known. It neither agrees with the context (which speaks not of the deliverance, but of the

preaching of Jonah), nor with the facts of the case as recorded in the two (not three) days and nights of the Entombment, nor with the corresponding passage of Luke (xi. 30). But, even if (like Acts i. 18, 19, and Matt. xxiii. 35) it is a later addition, it is an interpretation of unquestionable antiquity, and widely diffused throughout the early Church.

³ Matt. xvi. 4; xii. 41; Luke xi. 30, 32.

the sheltering gourd. But these all conspire with the story itself in proclaiming that still wider lesson of which I have spoken. It is the rare protest of theology against the excess of theology—it is the faithful delineation, through all its various states, of the dark, sinister, selfish side of even great religious teachers. It is the grand Biblical appeal to the common instincts of humanity, and to the universal love of God, against the narrow dogmatism of sectarian polemics. There has never been “a generation” which has not needed the majestic revelation of sternness and charity, each bestowed where most deserved and where least expected, in the “sign of the Prophet Jonah.”

LECTURE XXXIV.

THE FALL OF SAMARIA.

THE external glory of Israel was raised to its highest pitch by Jeroboam the Second; but its internal condition already indicated its approaching dissolution. On that condition a sudden light is thrown from a new quarter. We have at last reached the point where the Prophetical spirit began to express itself, not only in action and speech, but in writing. It was in the kingdom of Judah that this development took place in its greatest force; but it took its rise in the kingdom of Israel, in which, so long as it lasted, the Prophets found their chief home and their chief mission. Amos and Hosea, both belong, by birth or by their sphere of action, to the northern kingdom. Some few glimpses, too, into the state of Israel are afforded by the great Isaiah, now just appearing as a young man in the neighboring kingdom of Judah.

It is from these several prophetic documents that we arrive at a knowledge of the state of society in Israel, such as we have not obtained of any period since the time of David. Their whole tone is so true to nature, so descriptive of the sins of actual States and Churches, that when the preacher, who of all perhaps in modern times has most nearly resembled an ancient Prophet, wished to denounce the sins of Florence, he used the Prophets of this period as his text-book. Savonarola's

sermons on Amos are almost like Amos himself come to life again.

The foreign civilization of the house of Omri — the long depravation of the public worship from the time of Jeroboam the First — had produced their natural effect amongst the higher classes of society. One of the most widely spread vices was drunkenness in its most revolting forms. “Wine and new wine take away the heart.”¹ “In the day of our King the princes have made him sick with skins of wine.”² This was the canker in the beauty of the most glorious scene in Palestine, — the luxuriant vale of Shechem, and the green hill of Samaria.³ The gross intoxication of the Israelite nobles and priests almost resembles that which unhappily prevailed amongst the English aristocracy and clergy in the last century. It extended even to the most sacred functionaries: “They have erred through wine, and through strong drink are gone out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up by wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in giving judgment; for all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.”⁴ Even the monastic Nazarites were either required or forced against their vow to drink the forbidden wine.⁵ Great ladies, who are compared to the fat cows or heifers of Bashan, that feed on the rich mountains of Samaria, say to their lords, “Bring, and let us drink.”⁶ Out of this terrible vice sprang a brood of other yet more desolating sins, — licentiousness⁷ in

¹ Hosea iv. 11.

² Ibid. vii. 5.

³ Isaiah xxviii. 1. “Woe to the crown of pride, to the *drunkards* of Ephraim.”

⁴ Isaiah xxviii. 7, 8.

⁵ Amos ii. 8, 12 (Pusey).

⁶ Ibid. iv. 1, 2 (Pusey).

⁷ Hosea iv. 13; vii. 4; Amos ii. 7.

all its forms, oppression of the poor, self-indulgent luxury, robbery and murder. To the eye of the Prophet "these it was, and nothing else, which he saw, "wherever he looked, whatever he heard, — swearing, "lying, killing, stealing, adultery," one stream of blood meeting another, "till they joined in one wide inundation."¹ Many of the details are preserved to us. Innocent debtors were bought and sold as slaves, even for the sake of possessing a pair of costly sandals. The very dust which they threw on their heads as a sign of mourning was grudged to them. The large cloaks which were their only wrappers were used for the couches of the hard-hearted creditors.² Strict as was still the profession of religion, — holy days, offerings, tithes, sabbaths faithfully observed³ — Priests, Prophets, Nazarites highly honored⁴ — sacred ephod and image duly revered,⁵ — yet even in the very Temple of Bethel the luxurious, listless revelry was carried on;⁶ pilgrims coming to the sacred places at Mizpeh and Gilead beyond the Jordan, or to Tabor and Shechem, in the heart of the kingdom, were attacked by bands of robbers, often headed by the Priests themselves.⁷ Even the "Jewish" craft, as we deem it in modern times, appeared in the readiness with which religious festivals were pressed into the service of hard bargains. The calf was still worshipped, as the sign of the True God,⁸ at Dan and Bethel, but the darker idolatries of Phœnicia, authorized there also under Ahab, had been never entirely uprooted. The Temple of Ashtaroth still remained in Samaria.⁹ Baal was a familiar name throughout the

¹ Amos iv. 1, 2 (Pusey).

² Ibid. ii. 6, 7; viii. 5, 6 (Pusey).

³ Hosea ii. 11; viii. 13; Amos iv.

4; v. 21–23.

⁴ Amos ii. 11.

⁵ Hosea iii. 4 (Ewald).

⁶ Amos ii. 8.

⁷ Hosea v. 1; vi. 8, 9.

⁸ Ibid. viii. 5, 6; x. 5; xi. 1.

⁹ 2 Kings xiii. 6.

country.¹ Licentious rites were practised in the groves and on the hill-tops.² The ancient sanctuary of Gilgal was at once a seat of constant pilgrimage, surrounded by altars, and yet also a centre of wide-spread heathen abominations.³

As the rise of the house of Jehu had been ushered in by Prophetic voices, so was its doom. As in the struggles of the earlier Jeroboam, so in the splendor of the second Jeroboam, a Prophet from Judah came to denounce the crimes of Israel. He was of no Prophetic school, with no regular Prophetic gifts,⁴ — one of the shepherds who frequented the wild uplands near Tekoa, and who combined with his pastoral life the care of the sycamores in the neighboring gardens. He was, as has been well said,⁵ “a Amos. child of nature.” The imagery of his visions is full of his country life, whether in Judea or Ephraim. The locusts in the royal meadows, the basket of fruit, vineyards and fig-trees, the herds of cows rushing heedlessly along the hills of Samaria, the shepherds fighting with the lions for their prey, the lion and the bear, the heavy-laden wagon, the sifting of corn, — these are his figures. He was not a poet, so much as an orator. His addresses are poetical, not from rhythm, but from the sheer force and pathos of his diction. He appears on the hill of Samaria⁶ to denounce the luxurious nobles. He appears in the very sanctuary of Bethel, like Iddo, to predict⁷ the violent death of the

¹ Hosea ii. 8–17; xi. 2.

² Ibid. iv. 13.

³ Ibid. iv. 15; ix. 15; xii. 11; Amos iv. 4.

⁴ Amos i. 1; vii. 14, 15.

⁵ Dr. Pusey on Amos, pp. 151, 153.

⁶ Amos iv. 1; iii. 9 (Pusey, p. 148).

⁷ Ibid. vi. 14; vii. 9; ix. 1; viii. 3.

Whether the words in vii. 10 are represented as having been spoken by Amos, or only put into his mouth by Amaziah, is uncertain. It is more in accordance with the style of the Sacred Books to suppose the former.

royal house, if not of the King, — the fall of the kingdom, the fall of the sacred altar. It was not now, as formerly, the King who confronted the Prophet. It was the chief-priest Amaziah, who sent to the King to inform him of the new-comer, and himself warned him off the sacred and royal precincts. He was living there with his wife, his sons and his daughters, and on them Amos turned the curse which he had before called down on the nation. Such an apparition may well have roused the anger and alarm of the easy revellers “who put far away¹ the evil day.” “The “land could not bear”² those piercing moral invectives — that cry then first uttered, a hundred times repeated since, “Prepare to meet thy God.”³ Whether or not we attach any credence to the tradition, that he was beaten and wounded by the indignant hierarchy of Bethel, and carried back half-dead to his native place, it is the fate which such a rough plain-spoken preacher would naturally invite, and it would almost seem as if faint allusions to it transpire in more than one place in the New Testament.⁴ Well had he said, in the bitterness of his heart, “The prudent shall keep “silence in that time, for it is an evil time.”⁵

The calamities which Amos described or invoked, gathered fast over the devoted kingdom. The
 Calamities: great physical disasters, which we shall have to consider more at length in their relation to Judah, had also extended to Israel. The visitation
 Locusts, of locusts, which passed over the south, also reached to the gardens and vineyards, the fig-trees and olive-trees of Samaria.⁶ Their corn and wine failed;⁷

¹ Amos vi. 3.

² Ibid. vii. 10.

³ Ibid. iv. 12.

⁴ Pseudo-Epiphanius, *Vit. Proph.*

ii. 145 (Pusey, 150). Compare Heb. xi. 35; Matt. xxi. 35.

⁵ Amos v. 13.

⁶ Ibid. iv. 6.

⁷ Hosea ii. 9; vii. 14.

blasting and mildew smote them ;¹ drought and famine fell upon them. Rain was withholden in the early spring, or fell partially only on one city ; so that the inhabitants of two or three cities crowded to one for the sake of water.² The pastures of the shepherds were dried up, and the woods of Carmel withered.³

The plague, so common in Egypt, so rare in ^{Plague,} Palestine, sprang up, amidst the festering carcasses (whether as cause or effect) of the dead men and dead horses which lay around, as after a terrible carnage.⁴

The celebrated earthquake which shook the ^{Earth-} Temple of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives ^{quake.} in the reign of Uzziah was heard and felt throughout Palestine. The Temple at Bethel, like the Temple at Jerusalem, with its altar and its pillars, the ivory palaces of Jezreel and Samaria, “are smitten,” “shake,” “fall,” and “perish, and come to an end.”⁵ There were three nearly total eclipses during this period. One of these was visible in Palestine, in the year B. C. 771, on the 8th of November, at five minutes before one P. M.⁶ This may have been sufficient to have attracted the attention of the Prophet: “I will cause the sun “to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in “the clear day.”⁷

But these were forerunners of a still more fearful calamity. Now, for the first time, appeared on the Eastern horizon that great power which for ^{Rise of Assyria.} a hundred years was the scourge of Asia. The ancient empire of Assyria, possibly repressed for the time by

¹ Amos iv. 7, 9.

² Ibid. iv. 9.

³ Ibid. i. 2.

⁴ Ibid. iv. 10.

⁵ Ibid. iii. 14, 15 ; ix. 1. See Lecture XXXVII.

⁶ The exact calculation I owe to my friend Professor Donkin. The possibility of the allusion had been already noticed by Ussher.

⁷ Amos viii. 9.

the dominion of Solomon, rose on its fall, and was henceforth intermingled with all the good and evil fortunes of the kingdom of Israel. Already in the reign of Jehu her influence began to be felt. His name is to be read on the black obelisk which records the tributes offered to Shalmaneser I. in the form of gold and silver, and articles manufactured in gold.¹ The destruction of Damascus by Jeroboam II. brought the two powers of Israel and Assyria into close contact; there was now no intervening kingdom to act as a breakwater. Long before its actual irruption, the rise of the new power is noted by the Prophets. Jonah had already traversed the desert, and seen "that great Nineveh." Amos had already, though without naming it, foretold that a people should arise which should crush the powerful empire of Jeroboam from end to end, and sees the nations one by one swept into captivity.² Hosea brings out the danger more definitely, sometimes naming it, sometimes speaking of it only under the form of the "contentious king."³ The wakeful ear of Isaiah catches the sound of the irresistible advance of the Assyrian armies; their savage warfare, their strange language, the speed of their march, their indefatigable energy, "their arrows sharp, their bows bent, their horses' hoofs like flint, and their chariots like a whirlwind."⁴

In the midst of these dark misfortunes and darker terrors, the dynasty of Jehu came to its end. The curse of Amos was fulfilled, though not on the King himself. The great Jeroboam died in

End of the
House of
Jehu.

¹ Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 613; see Rawlinson's *Ancient Monarchies*, ii. p. 365.

predictions is maintained by Ewald, *Gesch.* iii. p. 303.

³ Hosea v. 13; x. 6.

² Amos i. 2-15; vi. 14; vii. 17; ix. 7-10. That these are distinct

⁴ Isa. v. 26-30.

peace, and was buried in royal state. But his son was the last regular occupant of the throne of Israel. There was, as it would seem, a revel prepared for him by the nobles. They were kept up to the mark as of a burning fever by some one powerful plotter, who is compared to a baker heating and stirring the oven. They drug the unhappy prince with wine till he is sick with drunkenness, and joins freely in their debauchery. Then in the morning the conspiracy breaks out, and the King is slain.¹ The year of Zachariah's death was probably the year of B. C. 771. the great eclipse already mentioned. The time at which he died was known as "that in which the kings "fell,"² and apparently also as the month in which "the three shepherds were smitten."³ From that moment the kingdom was occupied by a rapid succession of fierce soldiers, who reigned for the next fifty years, leaving little but their names behind. The "military despotism," which had characterized the kingdom of Israel more or less even from the time of Saul, now held unbridled and undivided sway. Zachariah was, it would seem, succeeded by a king whose very name is almost lost to us, Kobolam,⁴ and Kobolam was succeeded by Shallum. The troubled monarchy settled down for a time under Menahem and his son Pekahiah, till he too perished, in the midst of his harem, by the hand of Pekah.⁵ By this time the Assyrian conquerors broke upon the country; and the struggles of the various states of Western Asia, in their agony to escape from this overwhelming enemy, became more and more complicated, as the danger drew nearer and nearer.

¹ Hosea vii. 5-7 (Pusey).

² Ibid. vii. 7.

³ Zech. xi. 8.

⁴ 2 Kings xv. 10 (LXX. and Ewald, iii. 598).

⁵ Ibid. xv. 13-31.

In the presence of this threatened destruction, the long feud between Israel and Damascus was reconciled. An adventurer who had placed himself on the throne of Syria combined with Pekah to defend themselves against Assyria by attacking Judah.¹ The effect of this alliance, as regards the kingdom of Israel, was but to hasten its doom. In a few short years² it was broken up. Tiglath-Pileser, the Assyrian king, whose predecessor, Pul,³ had been satisfied with tribute from Menahem, descended upon the allied kingdoms. The kingdom of Damascus⁴ was now finally extinguished, and its inhabitants carried off to Kir,⁵ an unknown Eastern spot, the cradle, and now the grave, of that proud Aramaic nation.

And now the first great rent was made in the kingdom of Israel. The trans-Jordanic tribes had long hung but loosely on its skirts. Uzziah, King of Judah, had of late acquired royal pasturages in the downs⁶ of Gilead. But now they were to lose even this protection. We see little of their last expiring struggles. But their wild history ends, as it had begun, in bloodshed and violence: "Gilead was a city of evil-doers, polluted with blood."⁷ Now for the first time, just in the very crisis of their own fate, they were in possession of the throne. Menahem and Pekahiah were, perhaps, from the tribe of Gad, and they carried with them the savage customs⁸ which they had learned, es-

¹ 2 Kings xvi. 5; 2 Chr. xxviii. 5, 6.

² Isa. vii. 16.

³ Pul cannot be exactly identified (Rawlinson, *Ancient Monarchies*, ii. 387). Tiglath-Pileser II. seems to be the founder of a new dynasty (*Ibid.* ii. 393).

⁴ This is mentioned in Tiglath-

Pileser's inscriptions (Rawlinson, ii. 398).

⁵ 2 Kings xvi. 9; Amos i. 5; and see Isa. vii. 1, 2; 1 Chr. v. 26; Hosea x. 7; Zech. ix. 1.

⁶ 2 Chr. xxvi. 10 ("the plains," Heb. *mishor*).

⁷ Hos. vi. 8.

⁸ 2 Kings xv. 16. Compare *Ibid.* viii. 12; 1 Sam. xi. 2; Amos i. 13.

pecially from the ferocious wars of Syria and Ammon, in their own trans-Jordanic districts. Pekah, who overthrew this dynasty, was himself also probably from the same region. At least, his fifty companions in the conspiracy were from Gilead,¹ and two of them bore names which carry us back to the earliest days of those pastoral regions: Argob, from the fastness of Bashan, — Arieih, “the Lion-like,” from those Gadite chiefs of old, whose faces “were as the faces of lions,”² — remnants, it may be, of the original guards of David.³ Of one or other of these pastoral kings, the unknown Prophet, whose flickering light alone guides us through these stormy times, speaks as of the careless and rapacious shepherd who neglects the flock, and grasps only at the flesh of the fat.⁴ Of one or other too, as the fall of the dynasty approaches, he bursts forth into the cry which afterwards became proverbial, but which had a peculiar fitness to those nomadic chiefs: “Awake, O sword, “against My shepherd . . . smite the shepherd, and the “sheep shall be scattered.”⁵

Nothing now intervened to save from the destroying armies those outlying portions of the dominions of Israel. The gates of Lebanon were thrown wide open — the forests of Bashan howled in their anguish, as the destroyer swept through them, and their cry of distress was echoed back by the shepherds in their oaken glades and by the lions startled in their lairs down in the deep recesses of the Jordan valley.⁶

Then fell the grievous affliction on “the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,” “the Sea of Galilee “and beyond Jordan”⁷ — a darkness only to be lit up

¹ 2 Kings xv. 25.

² 1 Chr. xii. 8.

³ Ibid. xxvi. 31, 32.

⁴ Zech. xi. 16.

⁵ Zech. xiii. 7.

⁶ Ibid. xi. 1–3.

⁷ Isa. ix. 1.

by a distant gleam, seen far off by Prophetic eyes. Then the hostile Ammonites, long warded off, rushed into the vacant space, and the cry went up: "Hath Israel no sons? Hath he no heir? Why doth Molech inherit Gad, and his people dwell in his cities?"¹ "Feed them" — so the last reminiscence of their pastoral state expresses itself — "feed them; guide them like a flock of their own sheep, in Bashan and in Gilead, as in the days of old."²

Pekah was now left with a mere fragment of the ancient kingdom. With that terrible succession of royal murders, so forcibly described as "blood touching blood," he fell before a conspiracy,³ a band of conspirators, of whom the chief, Hoshea, formerly one of his own adherents,⁴ mounted the throne. Rival factions, like

those which divided Jerusalem in its last siege,
B. C. 730.

troubled also the last days of Samaria: the old feud between Ephraim and Manasseh, which had in the time of Jephthah given birth to the symbol of all party watchwords, broke out afresh — Ephraim devoured Manasseh, and Manasseh devoured Ephraim.⁵

Better than his predecessors,⁶ — like Josiah, in like case, in Judah, — Hoshea came too late to re-
Hoshea.

deem the fortunes of his country. At first the vassal of Assyria, he took advantage of the Tyrian war to throw off Shalmaneser's yoke,⁷ and began that system of alliances with Egypt,⁸ which from that time forward was the last desperate resource of the nations of

¹ Jer. xlix. 1.

² Micah vii. 14.

³ 2 Kings xv. 30.

⁴ Joseph. *Ant.* ix. 13, § 1.

⁵ See Lecture XVI. Isa. ix. 20,
21.

⁶ 2 Kings xvii. 2.

⁷ Shalmaneser is an ancient Assyrian

title; but no such name occurs in the inscriptions of this epoch. It is found, however, in the Tyrian history of Menander (Joseph. *Ant.* ix. 14, § 2; Rawlinson, ii. 401). For the Tyrian war, see Ewald, iii. 608.

⁸ 2 Kings xvii. 4.

Western Asia against the encroachments of Assyria. It might have seemed as if the old alliance with Egypt, which had set the founder of the northern kingdom on his throne, would support his last successor. But it was too late. Sargon,¹ the Assyrian king or general, descended on the country. Hoshea was carried off as a hostage for the payment of the tribute.² It was a sudden disappearance, "like foam upon the water."³ Then the Assyrian armies poured into the country.⁴

A struggle took place in Galilee—perhaps in the fatal field of Jezreel,⁵ perhaps in the deep glen of Beth-arbel,⁶ where, as afterwards in the time of Josephus, the Israelite population took refuge in the caves in the precipitous cliffs, and mothers and children were dashed down to the valley beneath. The siege of Samaria followed. Without their king, the people stood at bay for three years, as in the final siege of Jerusalem. As the end drew near, they gave themselves up to the frantic revelings of despair.⁷ At last the city was stormed. With the ferocity common to all the warfare of those times, the infants were hurled down the rocky sides of the hill on which the city stood, or destroyed in their mothers' bosoms.⁸ Famine and pestilence completed the work of war.⁹ The stones of the ruined city were

Capture of
Samaria.

B. C. 721.

¹ Not Shalmaneser (who is not expressly mentioned; see 2 Kings xvii. 6; xviii. 10) but Sargon, whose name occurs in Isa. xx. 1, and in the Assyrian inscriptions, and is supposed to be a founder of a new dynasty (Rawlinson, ii. 408).

² 2 Kings xvii. 4.

³ Hosea x. 7.

⁴ 2 Kings xvii. 5.

⁵ Hosea i. 5.

⁶ Ibid. x. 14. See Newman's

Hebrew Monarchy, 273. Compare Josephus, *B. J.* i. 16; Dr. Pusey supposes it to be *Arbela*, in the plain of Esdraelon; but the expressions rather point to a fastness. The LXX. reads "the house of Jeroboam"—the Vulgate, "the house of Jerubbaal" (Gideon).

⁷ Isa. xxviii. 1–6.

⁸ Hosea x. 14; xiii. 16.

⁹ Amos vi. 9, 10.

poured down into the rich valley below, and the foundations were laid bare.¹ Palace and hovel alike fell;² the statues were broken to pieces;³ the crown of pride, the glory of Ephraim, was trodden under foot.⁴

In the midst of this wild catastrophe, the voices of the Prophets rise, alternately in lamentation and consolation. From the prophets of Israel — from the seven thousand of Elijah's vision — two voices especially make themselves heard above the rest. One is the author of the 80th Psalm.⁵ The Divine protection is invoked under the figure that the unknown Prophet of the period has so often used: "O Thou that art the *Shepherd* of Israel, give ear; Thou that leadest Joseph like a "sheep."⁶ There is no mention of Judah — only the days are recalled in which the Ark marched⁷ in the wilderness before the three great kindred "tribes of *Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh*." That goodly vine of the house of Joseph, which hung⁸ over the valley of Shechem, which had been twice⁹ over brought from Egypt — which cast its shade on the mountains of Gerizim, and spread its branches to the sea, visible from those very heights, and its boughs across the Jordan to the distant Euphrates — was now trodden down. The wild Assyrian boar had trampled it under foot; it was burnt with fire: "O God of Hosts, turn and visit this "vine, which Thy right hand hath planted, the branch "that Thou madest so strong for Thyself." Often has this Psalm ministered to the encouragement of

¹ Micah i. 6.

² Amos vi. 11.

³ Micah i. 7.

⁴ Isa. xxviii. 3.

⁵ See Hengstenberg on Ps. lxxx. The LXX. calls it *ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἀσσυρίου*.

⁶ Ps. lxxx. 1. Compare Zech. xi.

3, 5, 8, 15, 16; xiii. 7.

⁷ Compare Num. ii. 18–24.

⁸ For the vine as symbolical of Joseph, comp. Gen. xlix. 22; Ezek. xix. 10.

⁹ Josh. xxiv. 32; 1 Kings xii. 2.

broken hopes,¹ but never so fitly as in this its first application.

The Prophet Hosea is the only individual character that stands out amidst the darkness of this period, — the Jeremiah, as he may be called, of ^{Hosea.} Israel. His life had extended over nearly the whole of the last century of the northern kingdom. In early youth, whilst the great Jeroboam was still on the throne, he had been called to the Prophetic office. In his own personal history, he shared in the misery brought on his country by the profligacy of the age. In early youth, he had been united in marriage with a woman who had fallen into the vices which surrounded her. He had loved her with a tender love; she had borne to him two sons and a daughter: she had then deserted him, wandered from her home, fallen again into wild licentiousness, and been carried off as a slave. From this wretched state, with all the tenderness of his nature, he bought her, and gave her one more chance of recovery by living with him, though apart.² No one who has observed the manner in which individual experience often colors the general religious doctrine of a gifted teacher, can be surprised at the close connection which exists between the life of Hosea and the mission to which he was called. In his own grief for his own great calamity, — the greatest that can befall a tender human soul, — he was taught to feel for the Divine grief over the lost opportunities of the nation once so full of hope. It is, as it has been beautifully described, a succession of sighs, — a Prophetic voice from the depth of human misery: “The words of upbraiding, of judgment, of woe,

¹ As applied by Gundulph of Rochester; Fleming, founder of Lincoln College, Oxford.

² Hosea i. 3; iii. 1 (Ewald; Pusey, and see Professor Plumptre's poem on *Gomer*).

“burst out one by one, slowly, heavily, condensed, “abrupt, from the Prophet’s heavy and shrinking soul, “. . . as though each sentence burst with a groan from “his heart, and he had anew to take breath, before he “uttered each repeated woe. Each verse forms a whole “for itself, like one heavy toll in a funeral knell.”¹ But in his own love no less he was taught to see, first of any of the Prophets of the Old Dispensation, the power of the forgiving love of God. Even the names of his children were intended to signify — one, the condemnation of Jehu’s massacres; the two others, the extension of the Holy Land and the Divine Mercy, beyond the limits² of Israel. “Come, and let us return unto the “LORD, for He hath torn and will heal us, hath smitten “and will bind us up. After two days He will revive “us; on the third day, He will raise us up, and we shall “live in His sight.”³ He goes back to the early history of his own northern tribes, when they were still loved as children⁴ — fresh from Egypt — taken by their little arms, all unconscious — drawn “with the cords of a “man, with bands of love.” Then comes the burst of sorrow over their fall: “How shall I give thee up, O “Ephraim! how shall I deliver thee, O Israel! how shall “I make thee as Admah! how shall I set thee as Ze-boim! Mine heart is turned within Me, My strong “compassions are kindled. I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not return to destroy Ephraim; “for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the “midst of thee.” Even from the grave the dead nation shall start to life. It shall blossom and burgeon with all the prodigality of the rich vegetation of its own northern forests; like the gorgeous lilies of Galilee, like

¹ Dr. Pusey on Hosea, p. 5.

³ Hosea vi. 1-4.

² Hosea i. 4, 6; ii. 1.

⁴ Ibid. xi. 1-4 (LXX.).

the cedars of Lebanon, with their gnarled roots, and spreading branches, and delicious fragrance.¹ Ephraim shall say, "What have I to do any more there with "idols?" And the Divine answer shall be, "*I* have "heard him and observed him." Ephraim shall say, "I "am like a green cypress-tree." And the answer shall be, "From Me is thy fruit found."

From Judah, these strains are echoed, more faintly, but still distinctly enough to show that the anguish of the rent was felt there also. The Jeremiah. Prophet Jeremiah is not so lost in the misfortunes of Jerusalem, but that he has an ear for the earlier fall of Israel. He hears a voice from the confines of Benjamin, from the height of Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. It is Rachel, the mother of the three mighty tribes of the north, the house of Joseph and the house of Benjamin; weeping as she looks over the desolate country, weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not. He bids her wipe away her tears, "for there is hope in thine end, that "thy children shall come again into their own border."² He hears a bemoaning, a plaintive lowing as of a powerful beast struggling with his captors. It is Ephraim, the mighty bull of the northern tribes: "Thou hast chastised "me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to "the yoke. Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned, for "Thou art the Lord my God." And to the haughty Son no less than to the mournful Mother, there is a tender reply: "Is Ephraim My dear son? is he a pleasant "child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly re- "member him still; therefore My heart is troubled for "him; I will surely have mercy upon him." And to the

¹ Hosea xiv. 4-8.

20; xxxi. 15-17; Ezek. xix., xxxvii.

² Compare Jer. ii. — iii. 5; l. 17- 15-20.

Prophet's vision, the valleys of Samaria and Shechem again are clothed with vineyards, and resound with "tabrets and the dances of them that make merry," "old and young together."¹

The hope of Jeremiah and of Hosea, like many others of the lofty hopes of the world and of the Church, has been fulfilled rather in the spirit than in the letter. In spite of these predictions "the ten tribes were never restored; they never, as a whole, received any favor from God after they went into captivity."² Many seem to have fled into Egypt, which, though unable to help the falling kingdom, received its fugitives.³ But of this migration we have no particulars. The general history of the tribes divides itself henceforward into two unequal streams.

The main body of the inhabitants were transplanted to the remotest provinces of the Assyrian empire.⁴ The first generation of the exiles lived to see the fall of their conquerors. The suddenness, the totality of the ruin of Nineveh has been preserved from oblivion chiefly through the predictions or the description of Nahum the Elkoshite. He was, we can hardly doubt, the last of the great series of Israelitish Prophets, whether we suppose that his birth-place was in Galilee, or the Assyrian village of that name; whether we suppose that he was amongst the captives in Assyria, or had taken refuge in Judah. There is something pathetic in the thought that the crash of these mighty cities, Thebes in the far south and Nineveh in the far east, is known to us only through the triumphant cry of this solitary exile. It is one sustained

Exiles in Assyria.

Nahum.

¹ Jer. xxxi. 18-20; compare 4, 5,

³ Isa. xi. 11, &c.

13.

⁴ See the special localities discussed in Ewald, iii. 613.

² Dr. Pusey on Hosea vi. 2.

shout of wild exultation that the oppressor has fallen at last. The naked discrowned corpse of the glorious city is cast out to the scorn and disgust of the world. No spark of pity mingles with the Prophet's delight. "All that hear the report of thee shall clap their hands at thee, for upon whom did not thy wickedness continually pass?" The lion's lair is at last laid waste, where the lion, and the lioness, and the lion's whelp once walked without fear.¹ In this storm of indignation and vengeance, the spirit of Prophecy in the northern kingdom breathes its last. Under this doom, Nineveh vanishes from view, to be no more seen till in our day the discovery of her buried remains has given new life to the whole of this portion of sacred history, and not least to the magnificent dirge of Nahum. Of him we know no more.² Tradition rejoices to trace to his influence the rise of the great Zoroaster. His reputed tomb hard by the ruins of Nineveh is still visited by hundreds of Christian and Jewish pilgrims.³

But side by side with this stern representative of the fire and energy of Elijah lingers a faint trace of the tender scenes of the Galilean valleys, of ^{Tobit.} the milder spirit of Elisha and Hosea. The Book of Tobit is, doubtless, of far later date in the history than the point at which we are now arrived, and it hardly pretends to be more than a religious historical fiction. But it was reckoned amongst the Prophetical books by Nestorius, and amongst the books of inspired Scripture by the Homilies of the English Church; was the especial admiration of Luther, and has often consoled the Christian sufferer by the same topics that cheered the griefs

¹ Nahum ii. 12; iii. 5, 19.

fall of Thebes (ii. 8), probably about B. C. 712.

² The only indication of time in the Prophecy is the allusion to the

³ Layard's *Nineveh*, i. 233; Ewald, iii. 690.

of the Israelite captive. Its doctrines and details must be reserved to the time when it came into existence. But its portraiture of the domestic life of the exiles, the exultation at the connection of Tobit's house with the great sanctuary of Kedesh Naphtali,¹ the longing regard for their own country, and "the rejoicing" over the fall of Nineveh — carry us back to the age in which the story is laid, amongst the funerals, and wedding-feasts, and parental anxieties, and cousinly loves, and the patriotic philanthropy of the "good" father of the "good" son, in the first generation of Israelite captives.²

After this it is difficult to discover any distinct trace of the northern tribes. Some returned with their countrymen of the southern kingdom.³ In the New Testament there is special mention of the tribe of Asher,⁴ and the ten tribes generally are on three⁵ emphatic occasions ranked with the others. The immense Jewish population which made Babylonia a second Palestine was in part derived from them; and the Jewish customs that have been discovered in the Nestorian Christians, with the traditions of the sect itself, may indicate at any rate a mixture of Jewish descent. That they are concealed in some unknown region of the earth is a fable⁶ with no foundation either in history or prophecy.

There is, however, another doubtful remnant of the northern kingdom, which has clung to its original seat

¹ The Patriarch of the Nestorians professes in like manner to be of the tribe of Naphtali.

² Tobit, Tobias. *Tob* = "good;" Ewald, iv. 234.

³ See Jer. ii. — iii. 14, 15; xxiii., xxx. — xxxi. 37; l. 17–20.

⁴ Luke ii. 36.

⁵ James i. 1; Acts xxvi. 7; Rev. vii. 5–8.

⁶ See Dean Milman's *History of the Jews*, 3d edit. i. 375.

with a tenacity exceeding even that of the tribe of Judah itself. The full history of the Samaritan sect belongs to a later period. But its origin dates from the first moment of desolation. Then ^{The Samaritan sect.} took place that union, in whatever proportions it may have been, between the remnant of the old Israelite¹ inhabitants and the Cuthæan colonists transplanted from Central Asia, which alone can account for the singular position, neither Jewish nor Gentile, which the Samaritans have occupied ever since. In the inroad of the lions from the Jordan valley,² through the tangled and deserted forests of Samaria, these foreign settlers saw a divine judgment on their alien rites, and though these rites lingered for two or three generations, they soon gave way to the traditions received from the Ephraimite or Benjamite priest, who revived for the last time the ancient sanctuary of Bethel, and from the poorer classes,³ who remained in the country after the court and aristocracy had been carried off. In the deep-rooted inveterate feud between the Jews and Samaritans, surviving even to our own time, but with a world-renowned bitterness at the time of the Christian era, we see a later outbreak of the fiery rivalry which burnt between the kingdoms of Rehoboam and Jeroboam. In the congenial kindness with which He who was Himself called in scorn a "Samaritan" attracted and was attracted by this despised sect; His gracious words to the Samaritan village — to the Sa-

¹ See Ewald, iii. 675, &c.

² 2 Kings xvii. 25. Comp. Zech. xi. 3.

³ That they were mainly Jewish appears — (1.) From their language. (2.) From the fact that in the New Testament they are described as

"strangers," but never as Gentiles.

Contrast Acts viii. 5, 16, with Acts x. 28, 46. (3.) From their own account of themselves. (4.) From their Jewish usages. (5.) From the many Israelites left in Palestine after the Captivity.

maritan woman — to the Samaritan leper — concerning the Samaritan traveller — we read a continuation of the same lesson which is suggested by the whole course of the history which we have been studying.

This kindly feeling towards Ephraim, Gerizim, Samaria, is the Biblical sanction of the truth im-
The doctrine of the Samaritan history. pressed upon us by all sound ecclesiastical history, that the grace of God overflows the boundaries within which we should naturally suppose that it would be confined. The kingdom of Judah had, as we shall see, the sanctuary and the sacred ritual. "The Jews knew what they worshipped;" and in the fullest sense "the salvation" of the nation came from them. But this did not prevent the growth of the series of Prophets within the kingdom of Samaria, and throughout their teaching there is hardly a word to show that they laid any stress on the duty of conforming to the ritual of Judah. There is, indeed, a modern tradition that the travellers described¹ by Hosea were pilgrims to Jerusalem. But of this there is no trace in the original text. The moral evils, the sensual idolatries of Samaria, are attacked with no sparing hand, but hardly ever the sin of outward separation. Both kingdoms are impartially denounced;² neither is by deliberate comparison placed above the other. The soil of the kingdom of Israel was as precious to distant pilgrims as the soil of Judea.³ The capital of Omri

¹ Dr. Pusey on Hosea, p. 42.

² The only exception is 2 Kings iii. 14, where Elisha refuses to speak to Jehoram, except for the sake of Jehoshaphat. Hos. xi. 12 has been alleged as an example to the contrary. But the LLX., the context, and the general rendering of Hebrew scholars

confirm the translation which renders it to be not "Judah ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints," but "Judah is inconstant with God, and with the faithful Holy One." See the comparison of the two kingdoms in Ezek. xxiii. 4, 11, 32.

³ 2 Kings v. 17.

was saved by as direct an intervention of Providence, as ever rescued the capital of David.¹ In the life of Elijah a later Jewish tradition maintains² that the rebuke which he addressed to Ahab was the first verse of the 76th Psalm: "In *Judah* is God known." But this, though it is what much of modern Judaism and of modern Christianity would require from him, is not the record of the ancient Scriptures. His rebuke to Ahab, as we have seen, was grounded on a far deeper basis. The question of the schism of Judah and Israel was one which he never for a moment stirred. The position of this greatest of the Prophets, living entirely apart from the authorized sanctuary of Judah, has been described with a thrilling sympathy in a remarkable sermon, preached more than twenty years ago by one who was struggling, with all the energy of a large and generous heart, to keep his balance in what he believed to be a schismatical and almost heretical Church. Elijah made no effort to set right what had gone so wrong; he paid no honor to the regular service of the Mosaic ritual; he never went on the yearly pilgrimage: in the one instance in which he is found in the kingdom of Judah, "he "passed by Jerusalem, he went on to Beersheba" — he passed on along a forlorn "and barren way into "that old desert where the children of Israel had wandered to Horeb the mount of God." His mission and that of his successor was to make the best of what they found; "not to bring back a rule of religion that "had passed away," but to dwell on the Moral Law, which could be fulfilled everywhere; not on the Ceremonial Law, which circumstances seemed to have put out of their reach: "not sending the Shunammite to

¹ 2 Kings vii. 16.

² *Life of Dr. Wolff*, i. 222.

“Jerusalem, nor eager for a proselyte in Naaman, yet “making the heathen fear the name of God, and proving to them that there was a Prophet in Israel.”¹

When our hearts glow with admiration for the splendid character of Elijah, or in sympathy with the tenderness of Hosea, we are but responding to the call of Him who bids us do justice and mercy even to those to whom, on theological or ecclesiastical grounds, we are most opposed; and recognize that the goodness which we approve was found, not in the Priest or the Levite, but in the heretical, schismatical, Samaritan. The history of Judah will have other and equally important lessons to teach us; but the history of Samaria, the very names of Samaria and Samaritan, carry with them the savor of this great Evangelical doctrine. The Prophets of Judah looked forward to a blessed time when Ephraim should not envy Judah, and Judah should not vex Ephraim. The Prophets of Israel, and He who, like them, dwelt not in Judea but in Galilee, “whence no good thing² could come,” and in Samaria, “with which the Jews had no dealings,”³ were incontestable witnesses that such a hope was not impossible.

¹ Newman's *Sermons*, viii. p. 415.

³ John iv. 9.

² John i. 46; vii. 41, 52.

THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH.



- XXXV. THE FIRST KINGS OF JUDAH.
- XXXVI. THE JEWISH PRIESTHOOD.
- XXXVII. THE AGE OF UZZIAH.
- XXXVIII. HEZEKIAH AND ISAIAH.
- XXXIX. MANASSEH AND JOSIAH.
- XL. JEREMIAH AND EZEKIEL. — THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.

SPECIAL AUTHORITIES FOR THE HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH.

I. Original authorities lost : —

1. The "Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel" (2 Chr. xxv. 26 ; xxxii. 32), or "of Israel and Judah" (Ibid. xxvii. 7 ; xxxv. 27 ; xxxvi. 8), or the "Book ('Words' or 'Acts') of Israel" (xxxiii. 18), from Amaziah to Jehoiachin.
2. The "Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah"; in the case of Rehoboam (1 Kings xiv. 29), Abijam (Ibid. xv. 7), Asa (xv. 23), Joram (2 Kings viii. 23), Joash (xii. 19), Azariah (xv. 6), Jotham (xv. 36), Ahaz (xvi. 19), Hezekiah (xx. 20), Manasseh (xxi. 17), Amon (xxi. 25), Josiah (xxiii. 28), Jehoiakim (xxiv. 5).
3. The "Book ('Words') of Shemaiah" (2 Chr. xii. 15).
4. The "Visions of Iddo the Seer against Jeroboam" (2 Chr. ix. 29); and the "Book ('Words') of Iddo the Seer concerning Genealogies" (2 Chr. xii. 15).
5. The "Book ('Words') of Jehu, son of Hanani" (2 Chr. xx. 34).
6. The "Rest of the Acts ('Words') of Uzziah, first and last," by Isaiah (2 Chr. xxvi. 22); the "Vision of Isaiah son of Amoz," containing the "Rest of the Acts ('Words') of Hezekiah" (2 Chr. xxxii. 32). Of this it is probable that Isa. xxxvi. — xxxix. forms a part.
7. The "Sayings ('Words') of Hozai" (2 Chr. xxxiii. 19).

II. The extant Historical Books: —

1. The Prophetical "Book of the Kings," completed at the time of the Captivity (2 Kings xxv. 27–30).
2. The Chronicles — "The Words of the Days," the last in the Canon — one book, divided by LXX. into two books, under the name of *Paralipomena*, "Omitted Parts." Compiled from various sources, of which the latest appears to be of the time of Alexander the Great (1 Chr. iii. 21–24).

III. Illustrations from contemporary Prophets: Joel; Hosea; Amos; Micah; Isaiah i. — xxxvi.; Zephaniah; Zechariah xii. — xiv.; Habakkuk; Obadiah; Jeremiah; Ezekiel; Isaiah xl. — lxvi.

IV. Illustrations from the Psalms.

V. Illustrations from Assyrian and Egyptian Monuments.

VI. Jewish Traditions (1) in Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 10 — x. 8; (2) in the *Quæstiones Hebraicæ*, attributed to Jerome; (3) in Fabricius, *Codex Pseudepigraphus Vet. Test.*

VII. Heathen Traditions in Herodotus, ii. 141, 159.

LECTURE XXXV.

THE FIRST KINGS OF JUDAH.

THE history of the kingdom of Judah is the history of a dynasty, rather than of a nation — of a city, rather than of a country. Its title reveals to us its strength as well as its weakness. The tribe of Judah, the city of Jerusalem, the family of David, had acquired too much fame during the preceding reigns to be easily lost. It is a striking instance of the influence of a great name on the course of human history. The long hereditary line attracted a prestige which in Israel was shattered by the constant vicissitudes of the royal houses. The “lamp”¹ or “torch” of David was always burning, even although it seemed at times on the very verge of extinction. There was a pledge given as if by “a covenant of salt,”² that the House of David should never perish. The interment or non-interment in the royal tomb was a judgment passed on each successive King, as the highest honor or deepest disgrace that he could reach. A royal funeral was more than a ceremony, — its costly fragrance,³ its solemn dirges, were regarded as a kind of canonization. The King was the person round whom the hopes of the Prophet Ruler⁴ constantly revolved, even though they were constantly disappointed. An ideal was always bound up with the royal office which

¹ 1 Kings xi. 36; 2 Kings viii. 19.

² 2 Chr. xiii. 5.

³ 2 Chr. xvi. 14; xxi. 19, 20; Jer. xxxiv. 5; xxii. 10, 18.

⁴ See Ewald, iii. 460.

kept it, in a peculiar sense, in the sight of the people. Jerusalem, the most recent, but also the most potent of the sanctuaries in its religious associations, represented, as no other place could, the national unity. The Temple of Solomon was the only building worthy of the national faith. All the most sacred relics of the primitive history were there stored up. Much as its splendor suffered from sacks and spoliations, yet its worship was only twice interrupted. Even the Pagan Kings, such as Rehoboam and Abijah, respected its sanctity, made costly offerings, and frequented its services. Athaliah and Manasseh established their own heathen rites under the shadow of its walls. The Priesthood, which had gained a new development at the time of the formation of the separate kingdom, became, as it advanced, one of the firmest institutions of the state.

And when, after the fall of Samaria before the Assyrian power, the little kingdom of Judah remained erect, it gathered into itself the whole national spirit. From this time began that identification of a single tribe with the people at large, which is expressed in the word *Jew*.¹ Only by an anachronism do we apply the words *Jew* and *Jewish* to times before the overthrow of Samaria. Had Israel remained faithful to her call, the charm which now invests the names of Jerusalem and Zion might well have been attached to Shechem and Samaria. But Judah and Jerusalem rose to the emergency, and therefore "out of Zion went forth the law, and the word of "the Lord from Jerusalem." The very smallness of the kingdom acted as a stimulus to its internal independence and strength. Again and again the fewness² of the people, the narrowness of its territory,³ are contrasted

1 "Jew," Ἰουδαῖος, is *Jehudi*, i. e. a "man of Judah."

2 2 Chr. xiv. 11 ; xx. 12 ; xxxii. 7, 8.

3 Micah iv. 1 ; Isaiah ii. 2.

with the vigor of its moral strength, the width of its spiritual dominion.

These were the main preservatives of the kingdom of Judah. They were also amongst the main causes of its distractions and of its ultimate fall. The overweening prestige of the royal family threw a disproportionate power into their hands. The polygamy which followed on the example of David and Solomon, in common with other Oriental monarchs, was far more persistently carried out in the south than in the north. Even the best of the Kings, such as Joash and Josiah,¹ had more than one wife. There was a local genius of evil as well as of good haunting the walls of Jerusalem itself that ultimately fostered the growth of heathen idolatry and of orthodox superstition to a degree beyond the worst excesses of Samaria and Jezreel. The Temple became a talisman; the Priesthood a centre of superstition and vice.²

It is the struggle between these contending elements to which, after the shock of the disruption, the kingdom and church of Judah was exposed, External struggle. that gives the main interest to the period of the seven first successors of Solomon. Both kingdom and church were menaced with destruction at its commencement. At its close both were established on a basis sufficiently solid to withstand the dangers of the later period for two more centuries.

It is necessary first briefly to trace the steps by which the kingdom was raised from the state to which it had been reduced by the loss of its external dominions. In this crisis, Rehoboam showed himself not al- Rehoboam. B. C. 976. together unworthy of his ancestors. The plan of defensive operations which he adopted in the pres-

¹ 2 Kings xxiv. 31, compared with 36. ² See Lecture XL.

ence of the appalling perils of his situation showed, as the sacred narrative expressly indicates,¹ that he still retained a spark of the "wisdom" of his father. He "dwelt himself" in Jerusalem. Unlike the northern Kings, who immediately began to shift their capital, he perceived the immense importance of retaining his hold on the city of David. This central fortress he surrounded with a chain of fortresses; in part carrying out the designs of his father, but in part increasing their number and providing them with garrisons, arms, and provisions.² These garrisoned cities, in which he placed those princes of his house whom he did not intend for the succession,³ were not, as might have been at first sight expected, on the northern frontier against the rival kingdom, but on the southern and western side of Jerusalem.

The reason for this soon become apparent. The great Egyptian monarchy was now not allied with the House of Solomon, but with the House of Jeroboam. And now, for the first time since the Exodus, Judah was once more threatened with an Egyptian bondage.

On the southern side of the temple of Karnac at Thebes is a smaller temple built by Rameses Shishak. B. C. 972. III. Of this one corner was sculptured inside and outside by the King, called in the Egyptian language *Sesonchosis*, in the Hebrew *Shishak*, in the LXX. *Susakim*, perhaps by Herodotus *Sasychis*.⁴ He copied almost exactly the figures already carved on the other parts of the temple, so that their forms and attitudes are mostly conventional. But in one of the processions thus represented there is to be found the only direct

¹ 2 Chr. xi. 23.

² Ibid. xi. 5-12.

³ Ibid. xi. 23. Compare Ps. xlv. 16.

⁴ Herod. ii. 136; see Kenrick's *Egypt*, ii. 6.

allusion to Jewish history on the Egyptian monuments. On one side stands the King himself, on a colossal scale, holding in his hand a train of captives. Meeting him is the God Amon, also leading a train of lesser captives, by strings which he holds in his hand, and which are fastened round their necks. On eleven are inscribed the names of their cities, and of these the third from Amon's hand was believed by Champollion to bear the name of *King of Judah*. This identification, which for many years attracted traveller after traveller to gaze on the only likeness of any Jewish King that had survived to our time, has been of late much disputed. It is now, perhaps, only permitted to dwell on the Jewish physiognomy of the whole series of captives, and the contrast, so striking from the inverse intensity of interest with which we regard them, between the diminutive figures and mean countenances of the captives from Palestine, and the gigantic God and gigantic Conqueror from Egypt.

Of this Egyptian conquest of Palestine, from the Hebrew narrative we gather only the announcement of an immense invasion, — the Egyptian army, swelled by the nations both of the northern coast and of the interior of Africa, — and the capture, the first capture, of the sacred city. For this the Egyptian record, if rightly interpreted by the most recent investigations, would substitute the names of the districts and Arab settlements in the south of Judah, with the curious addition of several Levitical¹ and Canaanite towns in the northern kingdom, as if to mark that the purely Israelite cities remained untouched. The golden shields were carried off from the porch of Solomon's palace,

¹ Taanach, Megiddo, Ibleam, Gib- See the list in the article SHISHAK,
eon, Beth-horon, Ajalon, Mahanaim. in the *Dictionary of the Bible*.

and the recollection of the catastrophe was long preserved in the brazen substitutes with which Rehoboam poorly tried to represent the former grandeur. The bitter irony with which the sacred historian records¹ the parade of these counterfeits may be considered as the key-note to this whole period. They well represent the "brazen shields" by which fallen churches and kingdoms have endeavored to conceal from their own and their neighbors' eyes that the golden shields of Solomon have passed away from them.

A like invasion is recorded in the reign of Asa. "Zerah² the Ethiopian" came up from the south, and Zerah, the decisive battle was fought at Mareshah. B. C. 947. The Book of Kings passes over the whole war in silence, and the place, the person, the numbers are too indistinct in the Chronicles to yield any certain results.³ Only we still welcome the peculiar spirit of the ancient Israelite warrior, the essence of religious courage: "It is nothing with Thee to help, whether "with many, or with them that have no power."⁴

The wars with the rival kingdom are more detailed. They much resemble those between the rival states of Greece or Italy. They chiefly raged round the frontier towns. Three of these — Bethel, Jeshanah, and Ephraim or Ephron — were taken by Abijah, the first probably only for a short time.⁵ Then Ramah — within six miles of Jerusalem — became an Israelite Declea; and, as such, Asa thought it worth while to purchase even Syrian aid, even with sacred treasures, to destroy it, and with the materials to

¹ 2 Kings xiv. 28.

³ 2 Chr. xiv. 9–15.

² It is possible that he was Osorchon III., who was Shishak's successor (Kenrick, ii. 350).

⁴ Ibid. xiv. 11; Ewald makes Ps. xxi. to be of this time.

⁵ 2 Chr. xiii. 19.

fortify two of his own cities on the frontier, Geba and Mizpah.¹ In the latter of these fortresses a well was sunk in case of siege, to which, three centuries later, a tragic incident attached itself.² It is a fine use to which Bossuet has turned this military incident as illustrating the duty, not of rejecting the materials or the arguments collected by unbelievers or by heretics, but of employing them to build up the truth. “Bâtissons les forteresses de Juda des débris et des ruines de celles de Samarie.”³

In a more startling form, involving a still wider lesson — if moral lessons may be deduced at all from these civil conflicts — certainly with larger historical results — this principle of mutual advantage was followed out by the King of Judah, who in external prosperity most nearly rivalled the grandeur of David, Jehoshaphat. He was to the kingdom of Judah almost what Jeroboam II. was in this respect to the kingdom of Samaria. The wars with Israel were at once ended by the firm alliance, sealed by the intermarriages, which took place⁴ with the house of Omri. It was almost a reunion of the kingdoms. “Jehoshaphat made peace with the King of Israel.”⁵ “He was as Ahab and Jehoram; his horses” (so he adopted the new image which the increase of cavalry through these wars introduced into all the language, religious and secular, of this period) “were as their horses, his chariots as their chariots, his people as their people.”⁶ Here and there a prophetic voice⁷ was raised against the alliance; here and there a

¹ 2 Chr. xvi. 1–6; 1 Kings xv. 16–22.

² Jer. xli. 9. See Lecture XL.

³ *Sermon “Sur la Providence”* (vol. xii. 400).

⁴ 2 Kings viii. 18, 26; 2 Chr. xviii. 1.

⁵ 1 Kings xxii. 44.

⁶ Ibid. xxii. 4.

⁷ 2 Kings iii. 13, 14; 2 Chr. xix. 2.

calamity seemed to follow from it. But, on the whole, the result was such as to leave behind the recollection of a reign of proverbial splendor.

The fortifications which had been begun by Solomon,¹ carried on by Rehoboam, and with less vigor by Abijam and Asa, Jehoshaphat continued on the largest scale. He built "palaces" (or "castles")² and "cities of store" throughout Judah, and following the precedent "wisely" set by Rehoboam, he placed in them his six younger sons³ as well as other "princes," chosen from the "host."⁴ Garrisons⁵ were also placed there with treasures.⁶ Besides these, he had special officers at Jerusalem. Their names are not otherwise famous, but the mere record of them shows the reviving importance of the kingdom of Judah.

Through the conquest or vassalage of Edom⁷ the door was opened to the commerce of the gulf of Elath. The port of Akaba, or Ezion-Geber, long discontinued, was once more alive with ship-builders and sailors. But the enterprise was defeated; and a mystery hangs over the history of its failure.⁸

Of his external relations, it is twice stated that "the
War with Moab. "fear of the Lord fell on all the kingdoms of
 "the lands that were round about Judah, so
 "that they made no war upon Jehoshaphat."⁹ The Philistines who, probably in the two Egyptian invasions, had thrown off the yoke of Judah, again recognized his sovereignty by tribute.¹⁰ The nomad tribes¹¹

¹ *Biranieth*.

² 2 Chr. xvii. 12; comp. xxvii. 4.

³ Ibid. xxi. 2, 3.

⁴ Ibid. xvii. 7 (Heb.).

⁵ Ibid. xvii. 2.

⁶ Ibid. xvii. 12; xxi. 3.

⁷ 1 Kings xxii. 47.

⁸ The Hebrew text of 1 Kings xxii. 47-50, seems at variance with that of 2 Chr. xx. 35-37.

⁹ 2 Chr. xvii. 10; xx. 29.

¹⁰ Ibid. xvii. 11.

¹¹ Maonites (LXX. *Mivaioi*, 2 Chr. xx. 1); see 1 Chr. iv. 4.

paid him tribute in rams and goats.¹ One great invasion he sustained. Moab,² which maintained an independent rank, though subject to the northern kingdom, with its kindred tribes of Ammon and Edom, crossed the southeastern border of Palestine, and encamped on the heights above the Dead Sea, by the palm-groves of Engedi.³ A sudden panic or jealousy⁴ dissolved the heterogeneous host in the very presence of the army of Judah, and the recollection of the expedition, accompanied as it had been by all the solemnities of a sacred war, lived long in the memory of the people. The opening in the hills where the spoil was collected, and where the "blessing," the "grace," on its distribution was pronounced by the Levites, was known as the "valley of Blessing." The whole scene of the wild confusion of those vast multitudes in the solitude of the desert hills; their tumultuous flight, as though before a stroke of that Divine judgment of which the name of the victorious King was a pledge — appears to have given the name of Jeho-Shaphat in this double sense to the wide valley down which the host fled, and to have furnished the Prophet Joel in the next generation with the imagery in which he described the Divine judgment on the surrounding heathens. Again, he seems to see them gathered in the fatal valley. Again, they sit like the fields of corn waving for the sickle; "Multitudes, multitudes "in the valley of decision."⁵ And it is a conjecture full of probability, that the 83d Psalm was sung, it may be, by Jahaziel the Levite, on this very occasion. No other event is so likely to have evoked the remem-

¹ 1 Kings xvii. 11; 1 Chr. ix. 4.

² Compare 2 Kings iii. 4.

³ 2 Chr. xxi. 1, 2.

⁴ Evil, disturbing, spirits. See Ewald, iii. p. 476.

⁵ Joel iii. 2.

brance of the invasion of the fierce nomadic hordes of Midian and of their unexpected flight. Tyre, Philistia, and even the distant Assyria, might naturally look with favor on an invasion that would cripple the reviving powers of Judah. The whirlwind of confusion fitly represents the panic which overthrew the hostile army and sent them flying like stubble before the storm back to their native haunts.¹

A still more decisive victory followed upon this retreat of the Moabites. The whole national force of Israel, combined with that of the neighbor nation of Edom, passed round the Dead Sea, and entered their southern territory. It is a campaign full of characteristic² incidents. The mighty sheep-master on the throne of Moab, with his innumerable flocks—the arid country through which the allied forces have to pass—the sudden apparition of the Prophet and the minstrel in the Israelitish army—the red light of the rising sun, reflected back from the red hills of Edom—the merciless devastation of the conquered territory, apparently at the instigation of the rival Edomite chief—the deadly hatred between him³ and the King of Moab—the terrible siege of the royal fortress of Kir-haraset, closing with the sacrifice of the heir to the throne,⁴ and the shudder of indignation which it caused—bring before us in a short compass the threads of the history of these rival kingdoms, each marked by its peculiar traditions and local circumstances, beyond any other single event of this period.

¹ Ps. lxxxiii. 6, 7, 8, 9, 13. See Hengstenberg, who also refers Psalms xlvii. and xlviii. to this battle; but this is more doubtful.

² 2 Kings iii. 4–27.

³ Ibid. iii. 26. Comp. Amos ii. 1.

⁴ 2 Kings iii. 26. It is possible

that the son of the King of Edom may be intended (see Dr. Pusey on Amos ii. 1); but the common interpretation seems the most probable (Joseph. *Ant.* ix. 3, § 2; Keil; Ewald; Thenius). Compare Micah vi. 6, 7.

Thus far we have tracked the external history of the kingdom, so far as it is needed as a framework of the religious struggle which was carried on ^{Internal} within. That struggle was neither more nor less than the endeavor to maintain the true faith in One God, against the Canaanite and Phœnician polytheism which had taken possession of the court of Judah. It was this which sunk the southern kingdom so far behind the level of the northern, when they first started asunder. It almost seemed as if there was something in the old heathen origin of Jerusalem which rendered its soil congenial to the revival of those old heathen impurities. It was like a seething caldron, of mingled blood and froth, "whose scum is therein and whose scum is not gone out of it."¹ The Temple was hemmed in by dark idolatries on every side. Mount Olivet was covered with heathen sanctuaries, monumental² stones, and pillars of Baal. Wooden statues of Astarte under the sacred trees, huge images of Moloch, appeared at every turn in the walks round Jerusalem. The valley of Hinnom now received that dreadful association of sacrificial fires and gloomy superstition which it never lost. The royal gardens³ of Tophet were used for the same purpose. Already the sights and sounds which there met the ear rendered the spot a byword for the funeral piles of the dead, and through the Rabbinical traditions the horror of this pagan Judaism — these decaying corpses, these ghastly fires of *Ge-hinnom* — has passed on into all the languages of Christendom, and furnished the groundwork of the most trivial and the most terrible⁴ images of suffering that modern Europe has received. If there

¹ Ezek. xxiv. 6.

⁴ The fire of *Ge-henna* (Matt. v.

² See Keil on 1 Kings xiv. 22.

22, 29, 30; Luke xii. 5) corrupted

³ 2 Kings xxiii. 10; Isa. xxx. 33; into the French *gêne*.

Jer. vii. 31, 32; xix. 6, 11-14.

was a "holy city," there was also an "unholy city," within the walls of Zion, and the two were perpetually striving for mastery, throughout the whole history of the place. The last mention of Jerusalem which occurs in the sacred books is as "the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt."¹ Such it was literally in the days of Rehoboam and Abijah.

In this struggle the heathen Jerusalem was represented chiefly by two powerful princesses, each of foreign extraction, — Maacah and Athaliah.

The free independent action of the Hebrew women, as seen in the cases of Miriam, Deborah, Michal, was not likely to be diminished when they were mounted on the throne. The influence of Bathsheba had secured the succession to Solomon. In the numerous harem of

Rehoboam the favorite queen was Maacah, the

Maacah. "daughter," or more probably the granddaughter, of his uncle Absalom, called after her own grandmother or great-grandmother, the Princess of Geshur. The beauty which Absalom had inherited (according to Jewish tradition) from this princess, descended to his daughter Tamar, and thence to her daughter Maacah, who acquired the same fascination first over her husband and then over her son, that her aunt Tamar had exercised over her brothers. "Rehoboam loved Maacah above all his wives and concubines."² When her son Abijah was chosen above all his brothers as successor, she filled the high office known in Jerusalem, as in the Turkish empire, by a peculiar name — the Queen Mother — *Gebirah* — "The Leader"³ — the *Sultana Valide*; and her influence con-

Reforms of
Asa.

¹ Rev. xi. 8.

² 2 Chr. xi. 21.

³ 1 Kings xv. 13; 2 Chr. xv. 16. xxix. 2. LXX. ἡγουμένης.

The word is only used here, in 2 Kings x. 13, and in Jer. xiii. 18

tinued through his reign and that of her grandson Asa. It was he who at last broke the fatal spell. He removed her from her office, and destroyed the private sanctuary, in which she seems to have ministered. The obscene wooden image which it contained was committed to the flames, in the valley of the Kedron.¹ From this moment Jerusalem began again to breathe freely. The polygamy of the court, which had lasted through both the preceding reigns, ceased; and the worship of the foreign divinities was forbidden. The worst form of licentious rites was partially extirpated, and the greatness of the achievement was commemorated by the renewal of a vow or treaty as in the earlier age, as if by a violent effort to bind the people to their better thoughts. This "Solemn League and Covenant" for the suppression of filthy and cruel rites, remote as it is from our age and feeling, breathed a more exalted spirit than that which, nearer to our own days (and no doubt in imitation of this earliest form of it), bound the Scottish nation to deadly war against a particular form of ecclesiastical government.

What Asa had begun, Jehoshaphat continued, by endeavoring, as it would seem, to supply some permanent counterpoise to the influences which Reforms of Jehoshaphat. had so deeply degraded his kingdom. For the first time we distinctly hear of regular judicial and educational functions in the Jewish Church founded on the "Book of the Law."² Words spoken, sung, shouted, with inspired force, we have heard before. This is the first recorded example, since the Decalogue, of such injunctions being committed to writing. In the commission which the King issued for the purpose of expound-

¹ 1 Kings xv. 13; 2 Chron. xv. 16.

² It is only mentioned in 2 Chron. xvii. 7-9; xix. 5-11.

ing the principles of "the Book of the Law," four great officers of the court and camp¹ stand first, and the nine Levites and two priests are associated with them. The whole measure implies a sense of the moral needs of the nation. The stern address of the 82d Psalm to the judges of Israel, even if not actually called forth by this step, corresponds precisely with the appeal of Jehoshaphat. That Divine character, which in the Old Testament is ascribed to judges, even more than to kings, prophets, or priests, is solemnly made the foundation of the lesson conveyed to them.² The Divine right by which they are to pronounce judgment is expressly mentioned, not as a warrant for their absolute authority, but as a necessity for their doing their duty. If we may safely interpret the indications given in the Chronicles, Jehoshaphat was here, as elsewhere, following up the great religious reaction which Asa had commenced, and which the only two prophets who appear during this crisis of the monarchy recommend. The aggregation of prophets in the kingdom of Samaria had kept alive the fire of the true religion there, even in the face of the severest persecutions. To supply this void in the kingdom of Jerusalem, the new spiritual and moral development now given to the Levitical priesthood could not but have a peculiar importance.

That importance was to be brought to light in an unexpected turn taken by this national struggle,—a turn for which Jehoshaphat himself, by his alliance with the house of Omri, had unconsciously prepared the way. We have reached the eve of a great revolution and counter-revolution, which alone of all the events in the history of the kingdom of Judah possesses

Atthaliah.
B. C. 883.

¹ The word *Benhail* = military officer, 2 Chr. xvii. 7.

² Ps. lxxxii. 6. See Lecture XVII.

the dramatic interest belonging to so many other parts of the sacred story, and which is told with a vividness of detail, implying its lasting significance, and contrasting remarkably with the scanty outlines of the earlier reigns.

The friendly policy of the two royal houses had culminated in the marriage of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, with Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab.¹ In her, the fierce determined energy which ran through the Phœnician princes and princesses of that generation—Jezebel, Dido, Pygmalion—was fully developed. Already in her husband's reign, the worship of Baal was restored; and when the tidings reached Jerusalem of the overthrow of her father's house, of the dreadful end of her mother, and of the fall of her ancestral religion in Samaria, instead of daunting her resolute spirit, it moved her to a still grander effort.²

It was a critical moment for the house of David. Once from a struggle within the royal household itself, a second time from an invasion of Arabs, a third time from the revolution in the massacres of Jehu's accession, the dynasty had been thinned and thinned, till all the outlying branches of those vast polygamous households had been reduced to the single family of Ahaziah.³ Ahaziah himself had perished with his uncle on the plain of Esdraelon, and now, "when Athaliah saw that Ahaziah was dead, she arose and destroyed all the "seed-royal."⁴ The whole race of David seemed to be swept away. Whoever the princes were who were called⁵ "her sons," they joined with her in opposition

¹ 2 Kings viii. 18, 26; 2 Chr. xxi. 6; xxii. 2.

² 2 Kings xi. 2; 2 Chr. xxii. 10.

³ 2 Chr. xxi. 4, 17; 2 Kings x. 14.

⁴ 2 Kings xi. 1.

⁵ Joseph. *Ant.* ix. 7, § 1.

to the fallen dynasty.¹ The worship of Baal, uprooted by Jehu in Samaria, sprang up in Jerusalem with renewed vigor, as in its native soil. The adherents of Baal, exiled from the northern kingdom, no doubt took refuge in the south. The Temple became a quarry for the rival sanctuary. The stones and the sacred vessels were employed to build or to adorn the Temple of Baal, which rose, as it would seem,² even within the Temple precincts, with its circle of statues, and its sacred altars, before which ministered the only priest of that religion whose name has been preserved to us, — Mattan.

But as, before, the Pagan worship had coexisted with the established worship in the Temple, so now the ancient worship continued side by side with that of the Pagan sanctuary. There was no persecution of the Priests in Judah corresponding to that of the Prophets in Israel; and at the head of the priesthood was a man of commanding position and character who, by a union without precedent, had (at least according to one account) intermarried with the royal family. His wife, Jehosheba,³ was the daughter of Joram. In the general massacre of the princes, one boy, still a babe in arms, had been rescued by Jehosheba. The child and nurse had first been concealed in the store-room of mattresses in the palace, and then in the Temple under the pro-

¹ 2 Chr. xxiv. 7. By such a daring act the half-Jewish Queen of Abyssinia, Esther, secured her power (Harris, *Ethiopian Highlands*, iii. 6).

² 2 Kings xi. 18; 2 Chr. xxiii. 17, 18.

³ Jehosheba in 2 Kings xi. 2, Jehoshabeath in 2 Chr. xxii. 11. The same variation appears in the names of the two other celebrated priest-

esses, Elisheba the wife of Aaron (called in the LXX. Elisabeth), and Elisabeth the wife of Zechariah. Both have the same meaning, — “the oath of Jehovah” or “of God.” Josephus, (*Ant.* ix. 7, § 2) makes her the daughter of Joram, not by Athaliah — *θυγατέρα Ὀροσία*. She is called the wife of Jehoiada in 2 Chr. xxii. 11 only.

tection of her husband Jehoiada and with her own children. He was known as "the king's son."¹ The "light of David" was burnt down to its socket, but there it still flickered. The stem of Jesse was cut down to the very roots; one tender shoot was all that remained. On him rested the whole hope of carrying on the lineage of David. For six years they waited.² In the seventh year of Athaliah's reign, Jehoiada prepared his measures for his great stroke. Every step was taken in accordance with the usages which had been gradually gaining head during the previous reigns, and all the means which his office placed at his disposal were freely employed. He placed himself first in direct communication with the five officers of the royal guard, now, as in David's time, consisting partly of foreigners, amongst whom the Carian mercenaries were conspicuous.³ These he bound over to his cause by a solemn oath. The Chronicler adds that a body⁴ of armed Levites was also introduced into the Temple. They were encouraged by an ancient prediction: "Behold the "king's son shall reign."⁵

The High Priest thus arranged the operations. It was on the Sabbath-day apparently that the stroke was to be struck. The guards (or the Levites) were divided into two great bodies. The first consisted of those who mounted guard on the Sabbath-day, as the Kings went to the Temple. These

Revolution
of Jehoiada.
B. C. 877.

¹ 2 Kings xi. 12; 2 Chr. xxiii. 3.

² 2 Kings xi. 4; 2 Chr. xxiii. 1.

³ 2 Kings xi. 4. The word translated "captains" is *hac-Care* (the Carians), occurring only here and in 2 Sam. xx. 23, apparently the same as Cerethites, 2 Sam. xx. 7. The word translated "guard" is "run-

ners," as in 1 Sam. xxii. 17; 2 Kings x. 25, &c. (Ewald, iii. 575.)

⁴ 2 Chr. xxiii. 2. The Chronicler (ver. 4, 5) ascribes to these almost (2 Chr. xxiii. 1) all that 2 Kings xi. 4-13 ascribes to the guard. Whilst 2 Kings xi. 4 omits the Levites, 2 Chr. xxiii. 6 wholly excludes the guards.

⁵ 2 Chr. xxiii. 3.

were to keep their usual position, in three detachments, the first at the porch of the palace, the second at one of the Temple gates, called the gate of the foundation; the third at another, called, doubtless from its being the usual halting-place of the guards, the "gate¹ of the runners." These were to keep their places to avoid suspicion. The second division consisted of those who attended the Kings to the Temple. These, on the present occasion, were to place themselves on the right and left hand of the young King, inside the Temple, in order to protect his person, and to put to death any one who came within the circle of rails which inclosed the royal seat or stand. As soon as they had effected their entrance, they were furnished by Jehoiada with the spears and shields that, as relics of David's time, hung somewhere within the sacred precincts, just as his predecessor Abimelech had furnished to David himself the sword of Goliath. Equipped with these weapons, by which the throne was once more to be won back to David's house, they took up their position.

The little Prince then appeared on the royal platform, apparently raised on a pillar near the gate leading into the inner court.² It is the first direct example of a *coronation*. The diadem,³ which was probably a band studded with jewels, was placed on his head by the High Priest, and upon it the sacred "Testimony,"⁴ which in the reign of Jehoshaphat had been raised into new importance. It seems like the intimation of

¹ 2 Kings xi. 19.

² Ibid. xi. 14; 2 Chr. xxiii. 13; Joseph. *Ant.* ix. 7, § 3; and comp. Ezek. xlvi. 2, 2 Kings xvi. 18, xxiii. 3.

³ 2 Sam. i. 10; Ex. xxix. 16; Ps. lxxxix. 40; lxxxii. 18; Zech. ix. 16.

It is a different word from the "golden crown" of David and Solomon.

⁴ 2 Kings xi. 12; 2 Chr. xxiii. 11. Whatever this was, it was probably the same as the "Book of the Law" in 2 Chr. xxii.

a limitation in the King's despotic power, — an indication that he was to be not, like David, above, but beneath the law of his country. He was then anointed with the sacred oil.¹ The bystanders, whether guards or people, clapped their hands together and raised the national shout, "Long live the King!" The sound reached Athaliah in her palace. She came at once into the Temple, as it would seem, with the same high spirit that had marked the last days of her mother, unguarded and alone. Both accounts give us, in almost the same words, the scene that burst upon her. "Behold" — the little child — now no longer the King's son or the unknown foundling, but "the King," — stood on his platform, at the gate of the court. Beside him were the officers of the guard, the trumpeters whose office it was to announce the royal inauguration. The Temple court was crowded with spectators; they, too, took part in the celebration, and themselves prolonged the trumpet-blast, blended with the musical instruments of the Temple service.² She saw in a moment that the fatal hour was come. She rent her royal robes, and cried out, in the words always applied to treason: "Conspiracy, conspiracy!" The voice of the High Priest was the first to be heard³ ordering the officers to drag her out from the precincts. So strict was the reverence to the Temple, that she passed all through the long array of armed Levites and exulting multitudes, out through the eastern gate into the Kedron valley,⁴ before they fell upon her, and

¹ By whom, is not clearly expressed; according to the present Hebrew text of Kings (xi. 12), by the people; according to the LXX. of the same, by Jehoiada; according

to the Chronicler (2 Chr. xxiii. 11), by Jehoiada and his sons.

² 2 Kings xi. 14; 2 Chr. xxiii. 13.

³ 2 Kings xi. 15, 16; 2 Chr. xxiii.

14, 15.

⁴ Joseph. *Ant.* ix. 7, § 4.

not till she reached a spot known as the “road or gate of the horses,” or “of the royal mules,”¹ was the blow struck which ended her life.

Then again took place one of the “covenants” or “pledges” of that age, — a league, as it were, between King and people, between the King and the true religion, as a consecration for a crusade against the false worship. As in Samaria under Jehu, six years before, so here in Judea, the Temple of Baal, with its altars and statues, was shattered to pieces by the popular fury. In front of the altars fell the Priest of Baal, Mattan. Guards were placed over the Temple, so as to prevent any rapine; and then in a long procession, formed of the officers, the guards, and the multitude who had taken part in the proceedings of the day, the boy was brought down from the Temple, by the causeway through which the guards usually preceded the King to and from the palace. He was brought into the palace, and seated on the golden throne within the “high gateway,” — “the throne of the Kings of Judah.”²

“And the city was in quiet,” and so ended the troubled scenes of the first Sabbath of which any detailed account is preserved to us in the Sacred Records.

The restoration of the house of David after such a narrow escape of total destruction was in itself a marked epoch in the Jewish nation; and much in the same way as in the like period of English history, when there was so strong an anxiety to secure an

undoubted heir to the throne, so now it is emphatically recorded that Jehoiada lost no time in securing a succession to the throne of Judah.

¹ Joseph. *Ant.* ix. 7, § 4.

² 2 Kings xi. 19.

“Jehoiada took for Joash two wives, and he begat sons “and daughters.”¹ But the peculiar circumstances of the restoration were also fraught with an interest of their own. The part played by Jehoiada raised the Priesthood to an importance which (with the single exception of Eli) it had never before attained in the history of the Jewish nation, and which it never afterwards altogether lost. Through the Priesthood the lineage of David had been saved, and the worship of Jehovah restored² in Judah, even more successfully than it had been in Samaria through the Prophets. During the minority of Joash, Jehoiada virtually reigned. The very office was in some sense created by himself. The name of “High Priest,” which had not been given to Aaron, or Eli, or Zadok, was given³ to him, and afterwards continued to his successors. He was regarded as a second founder of the order, so that in after-days he, rather than Aaron, is described as the chief.⁴

The first object was to restore the Temple itself. Its treasures had been given away piecemeal to invaders, even by the most devout of the Kings, and had been plundered twice over by the Egyptians and Arabs. Its very foundations had been injured by the agents of Athaliah⁵ in removing its stones for her own temple. To Joash, who alone of the Princes of the house of David had been actually brought up within the Temple walls, the reparation of its venerable fabric was naturally the first object. From

Reforms of
Joash.

¹ 2 Chr. xxiv. 3.

² Ibid. xxiii. 18, 19. This is omitted in 2 Kings xi.

³ 2 Kings xii. 10. Down to this time the chief of the order had been “The Priest.” The only exception

is the doubtful one of Jehoiada the father of Benaiah, in 1 Chr. xxvii. 5 (“the head Priest”).

⁴ Jer. xxix. 26.

⁵ 2 Chr. xxiv. 7.

him, as it would seem, and not from Jehoiada, the chief impulse proceeded. "Joash was minded to restore the house of the Lord." "The repairing of the house of the Lord" is mentioned as one of the great acts of his reign.¹ And it is instructive to see that the elevation of the moral above the ceremonial law, which characterized the best traditions of the Jewish nation, made itself felt even in the King who might, most of all, have been thought a mere nursling and instrument of the sacerdotal caste. When, from some unexplained cause, the Priests had failed to appropriate the contribution to its proper purpose, the whole hierarchy, with Jehoiada² at their head, met with a mild yet decided rebuke from the King, and a measure was agreed upon, very similar to those which have taken place in modern times on the suspicion of maladministration of ecclesiastical property. The administration of the funds was removed from the hands of the delinquent order. All future contributions were deposited in a public chest, placed close to the great altar³ in the Temple court, and were audited, so to speak, not only by the High Priest, but by the royal secretary⁴ in the presence of public officers. The measure completely answered. Confidence was restored, contributions flowed in, the workmen could be implicitly trusted, and the repairs went on in this and the succeeding reigns at a rapid pace. Nothing was spent⁵ on mere ornaments — everything was devoted to the solid repair of the fabric.

¹ 2 Chr. xxiv. 4, 27.

² 2 Kings xii. 7. In 2 Chr. xxiv. 5, 6, only Jehoiada and the Levites, not the Priests.

³ 2 Kings xii. 9. This is omitted

in 2 Chr. xxiv. 8, and the chest is placed at the outer gate.

⁴ 2 Kings xii. 10; 2 Chr. xxiv. 11.

⁵ 2 Kings xii. 13. This is contradicted in 2 Chr. xxiii. 12, 13, 14, and probably by implication in 7.

In spite of this unpleasant suspicion, there was no open rupture between the King and the Priestly order so long as his benefactor Jehoiada lived. Their joint rule, almost as of father and son, must have resembled the one parallel in the Christian Church, when Michael Romanoff as Czar, and his father Philaret as Patriarch of Moscow, ruled the church and state of Russia. Jehoiada lived to a great old age,¹ and on his death his services, as preserver of the royal Death of Jehoiada. dynasty and as restorer of the Temple worship, were esteemed so highly, that he received an honor allowed to no other subject in the Jewish monarchy. He was buried in state within the walls of Jerusalem,² in the royal sepulchres.

The reign of Joash, which had been lit up by so romantic a beginning, was darkened by a tragical end. Though only told in the Chronicles, it agrees so well with human nature, and with the circumstances of the case, that it deserves close consideration.

On Jehoiada's death, the Jewish aristocracy, who perhaps had never been free from the licentious and idolatrous taint introduced by Rehoboam, and confirmed by Athaliah, and who may well have been galled by the new rise of the Priestly order, presented themselves before Joash, and offered him the same obsequious homage that had been paid by the young nobles to Rehoboam. He, irritated, it may be, by the ambiguous conduct of the Priests in the affair of the restoration of the Temple, and feeling himself released from personal obligations by the death of his adopted father, threw himself into their hands. Athaliah was avenged almost on the spot where she had been first seized by her enemies. That

¹ For the difficulties attending the age of Jehoiada, stated, in 2 Chr. xxiv. 15, to be 130, see Lord Arthur Hervey's *Genealogies*, p. 113.

² 2 Chr. xxiv. 16.

fierce blood which she had inherited from her parents ran in the veins of her grandson :—

Indocile à ton joug, fatigué de ta loi,
Fidèle au sang d'Ahab qu'il a reçu de moi,
Conforme à son aïeul, à son père semblable,
On verra de David l'héritier détestable
Abolir tes honneurs, profaner ton autel,
Et venger Athalie, Ahab, et Jézabel.¹

So Athaliah is well conceived as predicting the future of Joash on the day of her first encounter with him. Once more the degrading worship of Baal and Astarte appeared in Judah. Against this apostasy Prophetic warnings² were raised, now more common in Judah than a century before. One of these came from a quarter which, from the King at least, ought to have commanded respect. With Joash, when a child in the Temple, had been brought up the sons of Jehoiada. One of these, Zechariah,³ had succeeded his father in the office of High Priest. On him, as he stood high above the worshippers in the Temple, the Prophetic spirit descended ; and he broke out into a vehement remonstrance against the desertion of the God of their fathers. At the command of the King, when he heard of this — it may be, at his hasty words, like those of our Henry II. — the nobles or the people rushed upon Zechariah, and with stones — probably from the Temple repairs — stoned him to death. His last words were remembered,⁴ — “JEHOVAH, look upon it, and require it.” The spot where he fell was traditionally shown in the sacred space between the great porch of the Temple and the brazen altar. The act produced a profound impression. It was a later Jewish tradition, but one which

Murder of
Zechariah.

¹ Racine, *Athalie*, Act V. Scene 6.

³ 2 Chr. xxiv. 20 (LXX. Azariah) ;

² “ *Burdens* were many,” 2 Chr. and see 1 Chr. vi. 11.

xxv. 27.

⁴ Ibid. xxiv. 22 ; Matt. xxii. 35.

marks the popular feeling, that this crowning crime of the house of Judah took place on the Sabbath-day, on the great Day of Atonement, and that its marks were never to be effaced. It was believed that when the Babylonian general entered the Temple on the day of its capture, he saw blood bubbling up from the pavement, and on being told that it was the blood of calves, rams, and lambs, he slew an animal of each kind on the spot. Their blood bubbled not, but that still bubbled on. They then told him that it was a Prophet, Priest, and Judge, who had foretold all that they had suffered from him, and who had been murdered by them. Nebuzaradan then slew on the place, by thousands, the rabbis, school-children, and young priests, yet still it was not quiet. Then he said, "O Zechariah, Zechariah, thou hast destroyed the best of thy people, wouldst thou have me destroy all?" Then it ceased to bubble.¹ The sacredness of the person² and of the place, the concurrent guilt of the whole nation,—king, nobles, and people,—the ingratitude of the chief instigator, the culmination of the long tragedy of the house of Omri, the position which the story held in the Jewish Canon, as the last great murder in the last book³ of the Old Testament, all conspired to give it the peculiar significance with which it is recorded in the Gospels as closing the catalogue of unrighteous deaths "from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah⁴ . . . who was slain between the Temple and the altar." It is a

¹ Talmud, *Taanith*, quoted by Lightfoot on Matt. xxiii. 35.

² In Mussulman traditions he is confounded not only with Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, but with John himself (Jelaladdin, 292).

³ The Chronicles, which stand last in the Jewish Canon.

⁴ Luke xi. 51; Matt. xxiii. 35. "Jehoiada" was read in the Nazarene Gospel. *Barachiah* was probably substituted to accommodate it to the murder in Joseph. *B. J.* iv. 6, § 8.

striking instance of the high tone even of the most sacerdotal of the sacred books, that the judgment which fell on Joash was believed to have descended, not because he had murdered a High Priest, but because he had broken one of the eternal laws of natural affection, — “he remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada “his father had done to him, but slew his son.”¹

The formidable Syrian king, Hazael, not content with his ravages of the northern kingdom, made a sudden descent on the south. Not Jerusalem itself, but its Philistine dependency Gath, was his first object. In this he succeeded, and then turned towards Jerusalem. A disgraceful defeat ensued. A large army of Jews fled before a small army of Syrians. Many of the aristocracy perished, or were taken prisoners. The conqueror was only bought off from Jerusalem by the surrender of all the sacred treasures which had been accumulated since the last confiscation of them for a like object by Asa.² The King sank into the languor of complicated disease, and, whilst he was in this state, he was attacked on his bed, in the fortress of Millo, by two of his guards, whose names are variously given, — of Ammonite and Moabite extraction,³ — to avenge the blood of Zechariah. It was not till his son Amaziah was firmly seated on the throne that the murderers were punished; and then (with a mercy shown apparently⁴ for the first time in the Hebrew annals) their children were spared. Joash himself, according to the more favorable version, was buried in the royal sepulchres; according to the darker view of his reign, he was excluded from them, though his corpse was allowed to remain within the walls of the city of David.⁵

¹ 2 Chr. xxiv. 22.

³ 2 Kings xii. 21; 2 Chr. xxiv. 26.

² 2 Kings xii. 17, 18; 2 Chr. xxiv.

⁴ Ibid. xiv. 6; xxv. 4.

23, 24. Comp. 1 Kings xv. 18.

⁵ Comp. 2 Kings xii. 21 with 2

So ended the last remains of the great struggle of the House of Omri for power. So was preserved the House of David through the fiercest struggles, inward and outward, that is witnessed till its final overthrow. So was confirmed the establishment of the Priesthood in the heart of the monarchy.

Chr. xxiv. 25. Verse 27 of the latter The LXX. reads "the *five*," and refers to the numerous prophetic makes it that amongst the conspirators "burdens" launched against the King. were his sons and the five.

LECTURE XXXVI.

THE JEWISH PRIESTHOOD.

THE character and history of the Prophetic office has been already described.¹ The time is now reached when another and very different institution comes into view, not for the first time, but with the first direct demand upon our attention, as a ruling power in the State and Church of Judah.

Of all the ordinances of sacred antiquity, the Priesthood is perhaps the one in which "the faculty of seeing differences" is the most needed. The use of the same name² in most European languages for this office, and

¹ See Lectures XIX., XX.

² The Hebrew word *Cohen* (of which the exact meaning is unknown) corresponds, though with some important differences, to the Greek *Hiereus* and the Latin *sacerdos*. But in English, German, Italian, Spanish, and ordinary French, these words are rendered by *Priest*, or the cognate words derived from the Greek *Presbyter*, "elder" — which designates an office, both in the Old and New Testament, quite different from that of the *Cohen*, and which in common Greek has no connection at all with religious functions. This confusion has further been increased by the application of the word "Priest" in most modern languages, not only to the Jewish *Cohen*, but to the second of the three orders of the Christian

clergy. It is true that in the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland and Germany, the word is not applied to their own ministers. But even by them it is applied to the clergy of the Greek and Roman Catholic Church, who apply it also to themselves. The English Protestant version has avoided this confusion by using the word "elder" as the translation of *Presbyter*, and the word "Priest" only as the translation of *Hiereus*. But the English Roman Catholic version (Douay), whilst it occasionally translated *Presbyter* by "ancient," has often translated it by "Priest," the same word that it employs for the translation of *Hiereus*. In the French Protestant version, the use of *sacrificateur* for *Hiereus* and *Cohen* has avoided this confusion, though

one or more functions in the Christian Church, has led to a confused notion of an identity in substance, which neither the original word nor the actual circumstances of the case warrant. The Prophetical office, as we have seen,¹ reached out of the Old Testament into the New, and has, to a certain extent, been continued to the Christian Church. But, as an institution, the power of the Jewish Priesthood passed away at the close of the Jewish dispensation. The Prophetic office contained in it elements in their own nature universal and eternal. The Jewish Priesthood was essentially Oriental, local, national, temporary.

Still in that limited sphere it had an important part to play, and the particular period of the history on which we have now entered, called forth some of its most striking characteristics. But its origin goes back to the earliest times. The Mosaic ritual, however much we may question the antiquity of some of its details, contains, no doubt, the groundwork on which the subsequent system was founded. The first appearance of the Jewish Priesthood is marked by its coincidence with the two phases of life which co-existed at the time of the Exodus. There was no Priestly caste at all till they had been familiarized with such an institution in Egypt. And its peculiar character was stamped upon it whilst the people were still pastoral, and while the tribe² was still in full force as a component part of the nation, when the manners of the people were still moulded in the fierce and hard temper

Origin of
the Priest-
hood.

they have complicated the translation of *Presbyter* by making it sometimes *pasteur* and sometimes *ancien*. This word *sacificateur* is misleading only from its implying as a constant act what only belongs to a portion of the history of the office. For the whole

scheme of the Jewish Priesthood I must repeat my special obligations to Reland's *Antiquities* and to Ewald's remarkable chapter in his *Alterthümer*.

¹ Lecture XIX.

² See Lecture VII.

of that primitive age. Unlike any similar sacred institution of Christian times, the Priesthood was not an order, not even a caste or family. It was a tribe, a clan, consecrated to religious purposes by the nation itself. Not by the hands of Moses or of Aaron, but by the hands of the whole assembly of the children of Israel, the Levites were set apart, and then presented by Aaron as an offering of the children of Israel.¹ The first Chief Priest is, in a peculiar and emphatic manner, represented as the Prince or Chief of the tribe. He is called beyond any other name, "Aaron" ² the Levite." He was the eldest born, "the corner-stone" of the clan. His distinguishing mark was the sceptre ³ or staff of the tribe. It was this which was laid up amongst the sacred treasures as the relic of that primitive time. And as he, so his tribe, retained, long after the conquest, their pastoral habits. Here and there, in every tribe,⁴ were to be seen patches of pasture land, on which no cornfield or vineyard of the agricultural life of Palestine could encroach, on which fed the flocks and herds of the shepherds of the tribe of Levi.

The origin of the tribe introduces us to the peculiarity both of character and office which marks the Jewish Priesthood. Modern Priesthoods — nay, even most ancient Priesthoods — have represented the peaceful element of the nations to which they have belonged. But the sons of Levi were essentially a warrior caste. As their first father, so were they: "Instruments of cruelty were in their habitations. Fierce was their anger, and cruel their wrath."⁵ Every step of their early history is marked deep in

Its connection with the tribe of Levi.

Its military character.

¹ Numb. viii. 5-11.

³ Numb. xvii. 8. See Ewald, *Ibid.*

² Ex. iv. 14. See Ewald, *Altenthümer*, 254, 301.

312.

⁴ See Lecture XII.

⁵ Gen. xlix. 5, 7

blood. The first is far back in their ancestral traditions, when the two wild brothers¹ appear side by side, hewing down with ruthless swords the defenceless Shechemites, and awakening the grief and indignation of the gentler Patriarch: "Ye have troubled me." "O my soul, enter not into their habitation."² This remorseless energy was a concentration of the indomitable zeal which was to be the weapon (so to speak) of the whole Hebrew race in its conflicts with the world. Simeon reappears for a moment only in the doubtful story of Judith.³ But Levi again and again reënacts the same scene. The consecration of the tribe was no calm ceremonial in the solitude of the sanctuary. It was by the tremendous self-dedication to the work of exterminating the worshippers of the molten calf. The victims which they offered on their consecration were not innocent bullocks, but their brothers, their comrades, their neighbors.⁴ And yet again, when the succession of the Priesthood was finally secured to the family of Aaron's eldest son, it was by the javelin of Phinehas, which pierced through and through the Israelite and his paramour.⁵ "Behold he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel." The Levite band that rallied round the ark, so far from being forbidden, like the clergy of modern times, to wear arms or to shed blood, were a band of determined soldiers, each with his sword⁶ by his side, ready to defend and avenge the Divine Presence at the risk of their lives against the

¹ Gen. xxxiv. 25.

⁵ Numb. xxv. 11-13.

² Ibid. xxxiv. 30; xlix. 6.

⁶ Ex. xxxii. 27; 1 Chr. xxvi. 6-8,

³ See Lecture XII.

12 (Heb.); 2 Chr. xxvi. 17 (Heb.).

⁴ Ex. xxxii. 26-29.

traitors within or enemies without the camp. So far from representing the elders, the old men, the "presbyters," from whom the modern name of "priest" is derived, they represented the flower of the nation's youth. The original Priesthood had, as it would seem, consisted not of the fathers, but of the eldest sons of the different households, who brought to the active ministrations of the altar, not the decrepitude or wisdom of age, but the vigor and fierceness of youth.¹ "The young man the Levite,"² in direct contradiction to the elders, was the name by which the ministering members of the tribe were called. Their music was the clanging trumpet or the dissonant ram's horn.³ Their morning hymn was the stirring war-cry: "Rise up, O Lord, and let thine enemies⁴ be scattered." The address before the battle, which, in Grecian warfare, was the duty of the general, was in Israel to be uttered by the Priest.⁵ And this martial character, though it was, as we shall see, considerably modified, yet continued almost unbroken till the age of Solomon, and never entirely ceased. The house of Ithamar, in all probability,⁶ won their ascendancy over the house of Eleazar by some daring feat of Eli through which he obtained the office of Judge. His two sons, Hophni⁷ and Phinehas, fell in battle before the ark. Abiathar⁸ was the constant companion of David in the most adventurous days of his early life. Zadok was renowned as a warrior⁹ long before he came to the court of David as Priest. Their two sons, Ahimaaz

¹ Ex. xxxiv. 5. See this whole aspect well brought out in Ewald, *Alterth.* 273, 294-296.

² Judg. xviii. 3, 15.

³ Numb. x. 1-11; Josh. vi. 6, &c.;

⁴ Chr. xiii. 14.

⁵ Numb. x. 36.

⁶ Deut. xx. 2.

⁷ See Lecture XVII.

⁸ 1 Sam. iv. 17.

⁹ See Lecture XXII.

¹⁰ 1 Chr. xii. 28.

and Jonathan, their natural successors in the office, were celebrated, not for learning or piety, but for their speed or agility.¹ Benaiah, the captain of the king's guard in David's reign, and captain of the host in Solomon's, was a priest.² And although, in that peaceful period, the sword of the priestly caste was laid aside, and the trumpet exchanged in great part for the harp and the cymbal, yet still from time to time the ancient fire reappeared. The priests were present with sounding trumpets to proclaim a sacred war against Jeroboam.³ Jehoiada arrayed his armed Levites with a strategy worthy of an experienced general for his stroke of state.⁴ In the greatest military struggle which the Jewish nation ever sustained—in the insurrection against Antiochus Epiphanes—their leaders were not Prophets or Princes, but Priests. By acts of valor and self-devotion, like those of Levi, of Phinehas, and of Benaiah, the Priestly race of the Maccabees won their way to regal power; and in the final conflict with the Romans, the writer who records it, whose work is pronounced by Niebuhr⁵ the best military history of ancient times after "Cæsar's Commentaries," and who himself took no mean part in it, was Joseph, or Josephus, the Priest.

Such was the first natural aspect of the Jewish Priesthood, the Prætorian guard, the Janissaries, the watch-dogs round the sacred shrine, like the Koreish tribe round the Kaaba of Mecca. They were literally a living sacrifice⁶—the consecration of the martial

¹ See Lecture XXIV.

² See Lecture XXIII.

³ 2 Chr. xiii. 12, 14.

⁴ Ibid. xxiii. 1–7. Even if we accept the account in 2 Kings xi. 8–11, to the exclusion of 2 Chr. xxiii. 4, 5,

the expression in 2 Chr. xxiii. 7 implies the military character of the Levites.

⁵ *Lectures on Roman History*, iii. 205.

⁶ Numb. viii. 10.

spirit of a martial and courageous people, needing for their office not the thinking head or the feeling heart, but the stalwart arm, the fleet foot, and the determined will.

But within this outer dedication of the tribe, there was the further dedication to the actual ministrations of the public worship of the nation. The sacrifices. Here, again, we must dismiss from our minds all that we commonly associate with the idea of worship. The arrangements of the Temple were, as has been truly said, not those of a cathedral or a church, but of a vast slaughter-house, combined with a banqueting-hall. Drove of oxen, sheep, and goats crowded the courts. Here were the rings¹ to which they were fastened. There was the huge altar, towering above the people, on which the carcasses were laid to be roasted. Underneath was the drain to carry off the streams of blood.² Close by was the apparatus³ for skinning and fleecing them. Round the court were the kitchens for cooking the meat after the sacrifice was over. For that which constitutes Christian devotion, — prayer, praise, commemoration, exhortation, — there was not in the original Mosaic ritual any provision.

The intrinsic meaning of ancient sacrifice lay in its opening an approach to God by a gift of the offerer, a gift valuable in proportion as it represented the entire dedication of the life. Hence the prominence of the warm flowing blood in the ancient world, inseparably⁴ connected with the idea of life. Hence the tendency to human sacrifice, always thrusting itself forward by

¹ See Reland's *Antiquities*.

³ Ezek. xl. 42, 43; xlv. 23.

² The blood, according to Deut. xii. 27, was poured upon (according to Lev. i. 5, &c., round) the altar.

⁴ See Ewald, *Alterthümer*, 29, 48, 59, 80-84.

the logical necessity of the case, but always repressed by the precepts of the law, humaner and loftier than any logic, whether of fact or feeling. Hence the correspondence which Psalmists first, and Apostles afterwards, found between this outward offering and that complete offering of the heart and will,¹ of which all sacrifice, heathen and Jewish alike, was but the faint symbolical likeness. "Verum sacrificium est omne opus, quod agitur, ut sanctâ societate hæreamus Deo."²

But these ideas lie unexpressed in the worship itself. All that was seen in the Mosaic system was the mechanical observance of acts which, to our minds, not only fail to convey any religious idea, but are associated with one of the coarsest of human occupations. For this purpose, as for the defence of the shrine, not moral or intellectual qualifications were chiefly needed. The robust frame, which could endure the endless routine of the sacrifices and carry away the bleeding remains,³ the quick eye and ready arm which could strike the fatal blow, these were naturally inherent in the fierce tribe of soldier-shepherds, and these were accordingly dedicated to the Temple service. Those who were prepared to wash their feet in the blood of the living enemies of their country, and to shed their own blood in the vanguard of the Israelite host, were not unsuited to the more tranquil, though not less sanguinary,⁴ work of the sacrifices. Those who still retained the habits of the ancient tribe, in

¹ Ps. xl. 7; l. 23; li. 17; Heb. hands. In Lev. i. 5, 11, iii. 2, 8, 13, x. 7. iv. 4, 24, 29, they are to be killed not

² Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, x. 6. by the Priest but by the offerer. This,

³ Lev. iv. 5-12. perhaps, was a remnant of the original

⁴ It is not clear whether the Priests Priesthood of the whole nation described in Ex. xix. 6 (see p. 458). But killed the victims with their own

their hereditary pastures round the Levitical cities, would be equal to the task of marshalling and managing the herds and flocks that crowded the Temple courts on great festivals. The actual hewing of wood and drawing of water were left to inferior ministers, but the main labors of the sacrificial system itself could be discharged only by the noble and august hands of the Sacred tribe.

Yet we cannot doubt that this merely external ritual — these ordinances which, if ever any, deserved the name given to them by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, “carnal,” “fleshly,” bound up with the raw and bleeding flesh of irrational animals — partook of the elevating character of the Religion which they represented. Those who have seen the solemn though startling effect of the Samaritan sacrifice on Mount Gerizim, the sturdy and comely youths holding the struggling sheep with a firm yet gentle grasp, the bright knives flashing in the departing sunlight, the sudden quick stroke, with which the animals lay dead on the ground, will have no difficulty in conceiving how a higher association could glorify even the meanest of trades and the most mechanical of arts. Butcher and Priest are now the two extremes of the social scale. A fine moral lesson is involved in the fact that they were once almost identical.¹

Moreover, the Sacred records themselves suffice to give us some notion of the modes by which the acts and profession of the Priesthood were distinguished from those of merely secular life. Like slavery, like polyg-

in 2 Chr. xxxv. 11, the victims are killed by the Levites; in 2 Chr. xxix. 22, &c., by the Priests. See Reland's *Antiquities*, iii. 18. Michaelis, *Laws of Moses*, Art. 164. Bähr's *Symbolik*, iii. 308.

¹ Θῦσαι (comp. John x. 10; Acts x. 13) is equally “to sacrifice” or “to kill an animal.”

amy, like the law of retaliation, of the avenger of blood, the institutions of sacrifice and of priesthood were not created at Sinai; they were adopted¹ from the already existing traditions of the world, but restrained, modified, and elevated by the peculiar spirit of the Jewish religion. The slaughter of mere dumb animals may seem to us a strange mode of approaching the Divine Presence, but we must remember that it was humanity and civilization itself, if compared with the practices of the surrounding nations. Sacrifice they all had in common. But whilst the sacrifices on Moriah consisted of the innocent slaughter of goats and sheep, the sacrifices of Moab and Ammon, the sacrifices in the valley of Hinnom, and on the heights of Olivet, were of men and women and children. Often as human sacrifice² intruded itself into the Jewish religion, it was never formally authorized.

The Priesthood again was an institution adopted from the customs of the whole primeval world. In its outward forms we seem to hear —

Notes that are

The ghostly language of the ancient earth,
Or make their dim abode in distant winds.

Of some few the original spirit may be faintly discerned. The extreme and punctilious cleanliness, the attempt to maintain a rigid simplicity in the details of the office,³ the prohibition of blemish and disfigurement, are qualifications of which the force has been acknowledged in various degrees for the ministers of religion, even in Christian countries. But there is yet a higher idea which penetrates and transfigures the office. The

¹ See this well expanded in Professor Goldwin Smith's work, *Does the Bible sanction Slavery?*

² See Lectures II., XVI., XXI.

³ See Ewald, 287.

Priests were those that “drew near to God,” and thus occupied, to some extent, the vacant space which for other nations was filled with statues and imagery. This position was materially affected by the higher truths both of the Divinity who was worshipped, and the people who were worshippers. The Priests were to exhibit, as it were, in dumb show, the greatness of the Divine Cause, which they were pledged to defend with their swords. They were to exhibit, as in a silent mirror, as in a concentrated focus, the mind of the people whom they represented. The very limitation¹ of the office arose from the fact that it was in its first beginning a modification of an original idea of a much grander and wider import. The Israelite nation itself was intended to be its own Priesthood. “Ye are a royal Priesthood,” “a kingdom of Priests.”² It was only from the failure of this that the separate, local Priesthood was provided as a substitute and supplement. It was to exhibit an Israel within Israel; not in that deeper sense in which the Prophets afterwards³ represented the same truth, but an outward reflection of the people to themselves in their relations to God. Whichever way the Priest, especially the High Priest, turned, during his public celebrations — whatever he did, every gesture, every color, every ornament, was a kind of moving picture, in which the Israelite was reminded of the Invisible Ruler; in which the Invisible Ruler was (if one may so say) to be reminded of His earthly and distant subjects. On the gold plate which glittered from afar on the High Priest’s forehead, and which was handed on from age to age, and survived even the fall of the whole Jewish system, when it was carried off

¹ See Kurtz’s *Sacrificial System*.

³ See Lecture XL.

² 1 Peter ii. 9; Exod. xix. 6.

with the spoils of the Temple to Rome,¹ the nation saw the pledge of their special nearness to the Eternal, whose name was inscribed upon it.² In the twelve jewels which shone upon his breast, they recognized themselves; he was "to bear the names of the twelve tribes on his heart, for a memorial before Jehovah continually."³ When he passed out of their sight into the innermost recess of Tabernacle or Temple, they could still track his course by the tinkling of the silver bells⁴ that hung on his mantle and seemed to enable them to enter with him into the Holy of Holies. When the sacred oil⁵ was poured upon his head, and flowed over his streaming beard, and enveloped in its fragrant odor the very outskirts⁶ of his dress, it seemed to be a consecration of themselves, a likeness of the brotherly covenant that should unite all parts of the Israelite commonwealth together. When the warm blood of the slaughtered ram⁷ left its red stain on the ears, and thumbs, and toes of the priestly family; when their hands were filled⁸ with the smoking entrails of the victims and with the cakes of consecrated bread, it was the intimation that the self-sacrifice of the whole nation was acted in their persons; and when the Priests in turn laid their hands on the dead animals, or turned loose the wild goat into the desert, or carried the drops of blood to the altar and the sanctuary, and threw up the cloud of incense, it was as though, by an electric affinity, the

¹ See the quotation from the *Ge-mara* in Reland, *De Spoliis Templi*, cap. 13. of the monarchy it was shared with the Kings (Reland).

² Ex. xxviii. 36.

³ Ibid. 29. Ewald, *Alterth.* 304.

⁴ Ex. xxviii. 35; Ecclus. xlv. 9.

⁵ The anointing was discontinued after the Captivity. From the time

⁶ Ps. cxxxiii. 2.

⁷ Ex. xxix. 20; Ewald, 270.

⁸ This was the act of consecration, which is always designated in the Hebrew by this expression.

sins, the energy, the devotion of the people penetrated into the presence of the unseen world. The imposition of hands¹ on the head was the form alike of dedicating the victim and the Levite. In each case the spark of life was conveyed, through the hands and fingers, full of vital warmth, into the recipient; as if magnetically to communicate the spirit and will, as the case might be, of the Israelite who offered the victim, of the Israelitish people who offered the Levite. When the new High Priest was clad from head to foot² in the robes of his predecessor, and the Priests appeared on great days in their white mantles, there were at least some to whom the sight suggested the aspiration after a higher investiture of moral qualities. "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness." "I will clothe her priests with salvation." "I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with a change of raiment."³

There were, in addition to these national and symbolical functions, a few subordinate duties of the Levitical Priesthood, which give it, in the Christian sense of the word, something of a directly religious character. Within a very limited circle, probably merely for the sake of pointing out ceremonial offerings or duties, they were to teach the frequenters of the Temple, and judge for them the complicated questions of ceremonial casuistry; and further to pre-

Subordinate duties of instruction.

¹ The offerer, not the Priest, laid his hands on the head of the victim (Lev. i. 6). The people, not the Priests, laid their hands on the head of the Levite (Numb. viii. 10). For the whole idea see Ewald, *Alterth.* 44.

² This, after the Captivity, was

the only consecration. He wore the vestments only in the Temple. After the banishment of Archelaus, they were kept in the fortress of Antonia, and given out on the four great solemnities (Joseph. *Ant.* xv. 11, § 5; Reland, *Ant.* ii. 1, § 11).

³ Ps. cxxxii. 9, 16; Zech. iii. 4.

serve, and from time to time to recite, the precepts of the Law.¹ Their aggregation in particular cities precludes the notion² of their having been employed as general instructors. But, doubtless, as the moral and spiritual character of the religion was developed, the area of their teaching was enlarged. The Levites especially took part in the instruction, and this widened the breach³ which existed more or less between them and the Priests. "A teaching Priest"⁴ was regarded as an object to be desired, and there was "a knowledge"⁵ of which his lips were claimed to be the guardians. Now and then, as in the case of Jeremiah and Ezekiel,⁶ a prophet rose out of their ranks; and in Ezra there took place the union, ominous for evil, when viewed in connection with its terrible future, but for the time indicating the highest spiritual point to which the Levitical functions ever reached — the union of Priest and Scribe. It was this union, doubtless, that, whether in Ezra or his successors, produced one of the chief Levitical books of the Hebrew Scriptures, — in which the priestly character⁷ is the most apparent, — the Book of Chronicles. Though the latest of all the canonical writings — latest, probably, in point of time, last certainly in the place which it holds in the original Canon, — it represents the workmanship of many generations. It re-

¹ Deut. xxi. 5; xvii. 8-13, 18; xxxi. 10-13; Ezek. xlv. 23, 24.

² See Michaelis on the *Laws of Moses*, Art. 52. He takes a somewhat wider view of the teaching duties of the Levites, than has been here described, but points out clearly how the mere circumstance of the Priests and Levites, having their fixed abode in forty-eight distinct cities of their own, incapacitated them from

performing the duties of clergy in regard to religious instruction, and what we should call the cure of souls.

³ 2 Chr. xxix. 34.

⁴ Ibid. xv. 3.

⁵ Malachi ii. 7.

⁶ See Lecture XL.

⁷ See an admirable statement of the case, in Dean Milman's *History of the Jews*, i. 328.

sembles the structure of an ancient cathedral, with fragments of every style worked into the building as it proceeded,—here a piece of the most hoary antiquity, there a precious relic of a lost hymn or genealogy of some renowned psalmist or warrior,—but all preserved, and wrought together, as by the workmen of mediæval times, under the guidance of the same sacerdotal mind, with the spirit of the same priestly order. Far below the Prophetic books of the Kings in interest and solidity, it yet furnishes a useful counterpart by filling up the voids with materials which none but the peculiar traditions and feelings of the Levitical caste could have supplied. It is the culminating point of the purely Levitical system, both in what it relates, in what it omits, and the manner of its relations and its omissions.

Side by side with this occasional and undefined duty of instruction were two other functions, of which one died out early—the other, alone of all, has lasted to this day. In the Chief Priest resided a power of oracular response to inquirers on certain great emergencies. Unlike the great Prophetic messages which came, each charged with the spirit dwelling within the Prophet himself, stamped with his peculiar style, clothed in his peculiar imagery, carrying with it principles of eternal truth and morality, the answers of the High Priest had no connection with his moral being, and were confined within a circle as narrow and outward as the office which he held. They were, in some unexplained manner, uttered or conveyed, not by himself so much as by his mere outer vestment or ornament. The jewels which hung on his neck or breastplate,—like those worn by the priests of Egypt,—or the white cape (Ephod) which was thrown over his shoulders, sufficed for the purpose.

Oracular
responses.

Even the Ephod¹ itself, beside the Priest, seems to have been used for this object. And the answers which were given were limited with the strictest reserve to the immediate occasion which evoked them, — hardly more² than an affirmative or negative, — never more than a single³ positive statement or command. Of all the institutions of the Jewish Church, it is the one which approached most nearly to the divinations and oracles of the heathen world, and, as such, it was the first to pass away. The latest High Priest who was thus consulted was he who especially belonged to the older age, Abiathar, the last of the house of Ithamar, and with him, according to the Jewish tradition, the power expired. In the period on which we now enter it never appears. The “Light and Truth,” which the words “Urim” and “Thummim” seem to express, grew brighter and brighter as this its outward symbol was lost. “A Priest with Urim and Thummim”⁴ was hoped for, but never seen, after the Captivity; and the last prophetic or inspired utterance that a Jewish⁵ High Priest ever delivered was of so terrible an import as to cast a shade on all like responses which had ever issued from that office.

The one remaining function to be noticed was of a more elevating and enduring kind. The <sup>Benedic-
tions.</sup> Priests had the peculiar privilege of pronouncing a solemn benediction on the people.⁶ It was in that triple form which conveyed a sense of absolute completeness, and, according to Jewish belief, was pronounced with a corresponding triple division of the

¹ 1 Sam. xiv. 3, 18 (LXX.); xxiii. 6, 9.

² Judg. xx. 18; 1 Sam. xiv 37; xxiii. 11, 12.

³ Judg. i. 2; 2 Sam. xxi. 1

⁴ Neh. vii. 65.

⁵ John xi. 49–51.

⁶ Num. vi. 22–27.

fingers of the upraised hand. The hand¹ spread over the people seemed to give back to them the life which had been, by the touch of their hands, communicated to the Priest. The hand of a Priest was lifted above the head; of a High Priest, above the shoulders. And the word Jehovah, which, in later days, was elsewhere altered to Adonai, in this solemn act was retained unchanged, as if in a sacred charm.² Alone of the many occupations of the Jewish Priests, this is retained by their descendants at the present day, in however degraded and secular condition they may be. The ancient melody of the blessing is said to be preserved in the chants of the Spanish and Portuguese synagogues.³ Alone of their many vocations—military, nomadic, ceremonial, sacrificial, dramatic, judicial, oracular—it has passed into the Christian Church. The upraised hand is still preserved by the Presbyterian clergy of Scotland. When once a year the English clergyman is required to make a slight variation from the usual Christian⁴ words of benediction, and recur to the older form, in this alone of all his ministrations has he preserved a fragment of the ancient Levitical ritual, and stands in the place of a genuine son of Aaron,—

The Lord bless thee and keep thee;

The Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee;

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

It will naturally be supposed that if we turn from the office to its history, the personal interest is less than that of any other of the great Jewish institutions. The Prophet and the King had each his own characteristic qualifications. A bad King

History of
the office.

¹ Lev. ix. 22. See Ewald, *Altthümer*, 44.

² Reland, *Ant.*

³ Engel's *History of Ancient Music*, 114, 325.

⁴ Communion Service.

or a false Prophet was felt immediately to have acted in direct contradiction to his office. But the Priestly functions were almost wholly independent of any other conditions than those of a physical and ceremonial nature. The office descended in earlier times, as a mere matter of course, from father to son; and the mode of transference, which in all times celebrated the inauguration of a new High Priest, and in later times was used to designate the succession itself, indicated, in the most unmistakable manner, its purely external character. The Priestly robes were handed on from generation to generation, and when the successor dressed himself in his dead predecessor's clothes, he was for all sufficient purposes a living continuation of the office of which the outer vestment, rather than the inward character, was the essential element. Very rarely do they act an independent part of their own. So far from representing anything like the separate spiritual power of modern hierarchies, they are completely incorporated with the civil institutions of the nation, and with very few exceptions swayed to and fro by its influences. In spite of their pasture-lands, they often appear to have been a needy and ill-provided class. The Levites are constantly reckoned amongst the objects of eleemosynary support,¹ and are described as dependent on irregular channels for their supplies even of ordinary food. A good piece² of roast flesh — a jovial supper³ — a cake of bread⁴ — the remains of the meat offerings and drink offerings⁵ — the heaps of corn, olives, and honey⁶ that

Connection
with the
general
condition of
society.

¹ Deut. xii. 12, 18; xiv. 29; xvi. 11, 14. See the Bishop of Natal on the *Pentateuch*, Part 3, §§ 650, 672.

² 1 Sam. ii. 15.

³ Judg. xix. 4, 5, 8.

⁴ 1 Sam. ii. 36.

⁵ Joel i. 9, 13; ii. 26.

⁶ 2 Chr. xxxi. 5–10. Compare Ex. xxix. 28.

were laid in the Temple courts, were the avowed objects of the homely ambition of the Jewish hierarchy. In the desert the order was controlled by the supreme power of the great Lawgiver. Through him, and not through Aaron, are communicated¹ the ordinances of its existence. By him,² and not by Aaron, not Aaron only but Aaron's sons were anointed for their office. In the order of the precedence in the court of David they rank after the commander-in-chief and the historiographer.³ One instance is recorded of a violent attempt to snatch at wider power; but that is within the sacred tribe itself; not of the Priesthood against the supreme jurisdiction of Moses, but of the Levites against the Priesthood.⁴ In the lawless period of the Judges, the sacerdotal caste largely shared in the wild, licentious character of the whole age. The Levite of Dan, the Levite of Bethlehem, Hophni and Phinehas, Eli himself, were average types of the disorder of the time. They rarely rise above it; they never herald the approach of better days. After the establishment of the monarchy they become, far more than Prophet or Captain of the Host, mere instruments in the hands of the King. The King was himself a partaker in the consecration of their own sacred oil. Ahimelech trembles at the least thought of resistance⁵ to Saul's despotic will. He and his whole house are swept away apparently with a less shock to the national conscience, with a less guilt⁶ on Saul's part,

¹ Ex. xxxiii. 1; xxix. 14.

² Ibid. xl. 12-16.

³ 2 Sam. viii. 16-18. But in 1 Kings iv. 1-6 (LXX.), the Chief Priest is put next after the King.

⁴ Num. xvi. 7-10.

⁵ 1 Sam. xxi. 1.

⁶ Ibid. xxii. 18; 2 Sam. xxi. 2.

Contrast this with the importance ascribed by the Rabbinical traditions to the slaughter of Ahimelech, which, in their judgment, was the cause of David's misfortunes. (See Jerome, *Qu. Heb.* on 2 Sam. xv. 7.)

than was incurred by the slaughter of the Canaanite outcasts, the Gibeonites. Abiathar, his son,¹ was deposed by Solomon. Zadok was, it would seem, appointed by Saul, and established first in joint possession of the Priesthood by David, and then in sole possession by Solomon. The influence of these great Princes was nowhere more powerfully exercised than in their modification of the Priestly offices, the duties of which were laid down by Solomon with a minute and rigorous care equal to any now exercised in the Christian Church by the most vigilant of Pontiffs.

Nothing shows more strikingly the vivifying and renovating power of these reigns, than that even into this cold mechanism they infused a new life, and therefore a new importance.

Improvements by David and Solomon.

Then, for the first time, the military character of the order gives way to more peaceful influences; the gentler music of the Prophetic schools is added in the Levitical service to the wild trumpets and dissonant horns of the earlier age; and hymns and prayers enter into the mute Priestly functions. Then also it broke its strict hereditary bounds. Some of its highest functions, those of sacrifice and benediction, were performed by the two powerful Kings,² who united in their persons, to a degree unknown before, the royal and sacerdotal offices. Even the inferior members of the royal family shared in the same enlargement, and are enrolled by the sacred writers amongst "the Priests" with a boldness which, of all the great versions of the Old Testament, the Vulgate alone has had the honesty and the courage thoroughly³ to recog-

¹ See Lecture XXVI.

sometimes *ἀνταρχαί*; the A. V. always

² See Lectures XXIII., XXVII.

"chief rulers;" the Vulgate always

³ 2 Sam. viii. 18; 1 Kings iv. 5. "sacerdotes."

The LXX. translates sometimes *ιερευσ*,

nize. But, although this was a temporary phase of its history, the Jewish Priesthood then received an impulse in Judah which it never since lost. In the kingdom of Israel, the mere fact of the religious revolution of Jeroboam cut them off from occupying any important position. But this very circumstance threw them with greater force on the kingdom of Judah. As from the time of the disruption, the northern kingdom was, as we have seen, the chief scene of the influence of the Prophets, so the southern was the chief scene of the influence of the Priests. The geographical situation of the Priestly cities, in the southern tribes of Judah, Simeon,¹ and Benjamin, doubtless contributed to this result. The Priesthood which had been in the time of David divided between three competitors,² in the time of Solomon between two, were at last concentrated in the single person of the chief descendant of Zadok, who in the time of Jehoiada assumed for the first³ or nearly the first time, the title of "High Priest." Under him there occasionally appears a "Second Priest," and under these an indefinite number,⁴ known as "the door-keepers." Jehoiada, Azariah, Hilkiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are amongst the chief personages of the later history. After the return, Ezra, Joshua, Simon the Just, and Jaddua figure as conspicuously. And in the Maccabees, for the first time since Eli, a priestly dynasty mounts the throne; and, though at last rendered still more dependent on the will of the Roman governors than it had formerly been on that of the Jewish Kings, the High Priesthood retained its

Its growth
in the
kingdom
of Judah,

after the
Captivity.

¹ Josh. xxi. 11-19; 1 Chr. vi. 54-60.

³ The only exceptions are Lev. xxi. 10; 1 Chr. xxvii. 5.

² Zadok and Abiathar, and (1 Chr. xxvii. 5) Jehoiada the First.

⁴ 2 Kings xii. 9; xxiii. 4; xxv. 18.

hold on the nation till the end, and disappeared only with the fall of Jerusalem, whilst the Priestly and Levitical functions have continued even to this day.¹

It will be seen that, in point of religious importance, the Levitical Priesthood was inferior not only to the Prophetic office which stood in ^{Its inferior place.} direct antagonism, but to the Lawgiver, the King, and the Psalmist. Moses was incomparably superior to Aaron, David to Abiathar, Solomon to Zadok. The vices, even the idolatries of the kingdom of Judah, received from them hardly any rebuke. They served, as it would appear, the altars of the false gods,² as well as of the true. Full of interest and beauty as is the Book of Chronicles, it yet, least of any of the sacred books, partakes of the supernatural gift of courageous impartiality which elsewhere is so remarkable. The whole sacrificial system to which they administered awakened, in the highest spirits of the Jewish Church itself, a feeling almost amounting to aversion. Its inferiority to the rest of the Mosaic revelation is stated by the Prophets in terms so strong as almost to reject it from the category of divine ordinances at all. "I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day³ that I brought them out of the land

¹ In the later Prophetic literature, the words "Priest" and "Levite" are used as if synonymous. This may have arisen from the gradual diminution of the Aaronic family, which at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem seems to have been reduced to five (2 Kings xxv. 18; comp. xxiii. 4, xii. 9); and which, even under the earlier Kings, does not seem to have been much more numerous since the massacre of Nob (see Lecture XXI.).

See Jer. xxxiii. 18, 21, 22; Ezek. xl. 46; xliii. 19; xlv. 10, 15; xlv. 5; xlviii. 13; Mal. ii. 4, 8; iii. 3. The same usage prevails in Deut. x. 8, 9; xvii. 9, 18; xviii. 1; xxi. 5; xxiv. 8; xxvii. 9; xxxi. 9. This peculiarity of phraseology is well put in the Bishop of Natal's work on the *Pentateuch*, Part 3, §§ 542, 630, 668.

² Ezek. xx. 31, 40.

³ Jer. vii. 22.

“of Egypt concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices.” “Sacrifice¹ and burnt offering Thou didst not desire.” “Was it to Me² that ye offered sacrifices and burnt offerings during the forty years in the wilderness?” “I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he-goats.”³ “I hate and despise your feast days.”⁴ . . . “Though ye offer Me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.” Leave as much room as we will for Oriental diction, grant that the expressions may have been sharpened by the peculiar circumstances of the time, still the contempt, the irony, the disgust expressed at the very thought of the slaughtered victims, has a strength which must be of universal significance, and which could hardly be exceeded by the disdainful language of Western philosophy or modern Puritanism. In one remarkable passage, ascribed to Asaph the psalmist, this Prophetic protest is raised to the rank even of a new revelation. There God is described as descending on Mount Zion, in storm and fire, as He had before descended on Mount Sinai, and declaring not merely in the presence of His own people, but to the whole universe, a deeper and wider law even than that of Moses. He the Lord of the world stood in no need of sacrifices. It was not to be thought that He, to whom belonged the numberless cattle that strayed over hill and forest, could desire to devour the flesh of bulls, or drink the warm blood of the goat. The only sacrifice which He could value was that of thanksgiving, of prayer, and of a life just, pure, tender, and true.⁵ This is a lesson from its his-

¹ Ps. xl. 6.

² This seems the most probable sense of Amos v. 25 (Dr. Pusey).

³ Isa. i. 11.

⁴ Amos v. 22.

⁵ Ps. l. 1, 2, 12, 13, 14, 23.

tory which, in spite of its wide difference from all Christian ministries and priesthoods, they may still derive from it. Any religious institution which has an outward organization and a long traditional sanctity must, in some degree, be exposed to the tendency of resting, like the Jewish Priesthood, in the substitution of dogma, ceremony, antiquity, for morality and devotion. That the Levitical ritual should, even in the very time of its importance, and, we may add, of its usefulness, have called down those terrible denunciations, is one of the strongest warnings which the Bible contains against the letter — the form — the husk — of religion, however near its connection with the most sacred truths. The crime of Caiaphas is the last culminating proof that the opposition of the Prophets to the growth of the Priestly and Sacrificial system was based on an eternal principle, which carries with it a rebuke to the office which bears the name of Priesthood throughout the world.

But we must not so part with this great institution. That in spite of those tremendous denunciations, and in spite of those awful consequences Its importance. of its tendencies, it should have existed at all, and received a sanction however limited, is an instance of the many-sided character of the Sacred History. The Jewish Priesthood was, as I have said, the mere skeleton of the Jewish religion; but it may also be said to have been its backbone. It was its husk; but it may also be said to have been its hard shell. What Its pertinacity. Goethe has finely remarked of the Jewish people itself, that its chief claim before the judgment-seat of nations is its steadfastness, cohesion, and obstinate toughness, is exemplified in the fullest degree in

its Priesthood.¹ Compared with the high and refined functions of Prophet, and King, and Psalmist, it repels us by the coarseness of its grain and the rudeness of its objects; but in sheer persistence and longevity it surpassed them all. It is a dynasty which began before the monarchy, almost before the Prophets. It outlived the monarchy altogether. It lived on through periods when Prophecy had totally ceased. It witnessed the fall of the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, and Grecian empires. It formed the rallying-point of the Jewish nation in the immense void of the return from the Captivity, in the death-struggle with Antiochus; and in the last agony of the nation, the High Priesthood is the last institution visible before the final crash of the system. And although since that time it has sunk into an insignificance which accords well with its secular and earthly character, yet it is the only institution dating back as far as the monarchy, which has survived even in form. The family names of "Cohen" and "Levy" still bear witness to the long recollection of "the Priest" and "the Levite." The offices still linger, though in a form which shows, if proof were needed, how entirely distinct they are from the higher spiritual functions of teacher or preacher. The Priests still bless the people at the close of certain high ceremonies, and for a small fee ransom the first-born of Jewish families, and if present

¹ "At the judgment-seat of the God of nations, it is not asked whether this is the best, the most excellent nation," but "whether it lasts, whether it has continued. The Israelitish people . . . possesses few virtues and most of the faults of other nations; but in cohesion, steadfastness, valor,

and, when all this could not serve, in obstinate toughness it has no match. It is the most perseverant nation in the world: it is, it was, it will be, to glorify the name of Jehovah through all ages." — *Wilhelm Meister, Travels*, chap. xi.

at the synagogue have a right to read the law before any one else. The Levites pour water on the hands of the Priests before the blessing, and take precedence after them in reading the law. The triple fingers of the benediction mark the gravestone of a Priest; the vase of water, the gravestone of a Levite. The meanness of their social position, — without wealth, without dignity, without the right of preaching or exhortation, — the mere appendage of some ordinary trade, immensely inferior to the Rabbi, who is the real representative of the modern Jewish Church, is of itself a direct continuation of the essential characteristics of their ancient office. They are subordinate now, as they were subordinate during the larger part of their existence in ancient times. They are silent as teachers now, as they usually were before. Their functions are entirely mechanical now, as for the most part they were always.

In the Samaritan community the office is somewhat more important. There the Rabbi has not assumed the position which he occupies in modern Judaism. The alleged descendants of Aaron, who are supposed to have continued at Shechem after their disappearance from Jerusalem, became extinct in the beginning¹ of the seventeenth century. But their functions were transferred to Levites, by whom they have been exercised ever since.

To this tenacity of life it is owing that, when out of the ruin of the Jewish Church the Christian Church arose, the Priesthood was the one fragment of the ancient system standing out in unbroken strength, on which to hang the new truths which the Jewish Apostles had to present to their

Christian
illustrations
drawn from
it.

¹ A. D. 1631, Mills's *Nablus and Samaritans*, p. 186.

countrymen. They, indeed, by the spirit which was in them, — their Master in the highest sense of all, — continued the line of the Prophets far more directly than they could be said to continue or even to use the merely national and local institution of the Priesthood. Still, for most purposes of outward illustration, the Priesthood was more available than the Prophetic office. The very destruction which was impending over it rendered more imperative the need of showing how completely all that it expressed, or could possibly express, was answered in the Christian dispensation, not by any earthly or ecclesiastical organization, but by the spiritual nearness to God, which, through the life and death of Christ, had been communicated to all who shared in His Spirit. The stream of precious oil which enveloped the High Priest had invested him, in a prominent degree, with the name of “the Messiah.” “The Anointed Priest,” “the Messiah Priest,” was one of the titles of his office. It was to the succession of the High Priesthood that even Christian writers applied “the Messiah” of Daniel.¹ And when the name of “the CHRIST” was added to JESUS, the son of Mary, it probably suggested to His contemporaries, beyond any other thought, that He was consecrated for His special nearness to God by that anointing of moral and spiritual fragrance, which breathed, as it were, myrrh, aloes, and cassia from all His garments. The “blood of bulls, and goats, and calves,” is treated almost with the same contempt as it had been by the ancient Prophets.² But it is taken to shadow forth to those who had seen it flowing, the only true sacrifice of the blood³ shed on Calvary, — the sacrifice, not of dead, irrational animals, but of reasonable beings⁴ in the com-

¹ Dan. ix. 25, 26 ; Eus. *H. E.* i. 6.

³ Heb. ix. 14.

² Heb. ix. 12, 13 ; x. 4.

⁴ *Ibid.* x. 5-12 ; Rom. xii. 1.

mon acts of life, and of the will and spirit of Him who, by one decisive sacrificial act, destroyed the value of all Jewish and all heathen sacrifices forever. The "Priesthood," with all its princely magnificence and venerable usages, became, as it were, a halo of glory for One who both in life and death dealt against it the heaviest blow that any earthly Priesthood ever sustained. The original idea of the royal Priesthood of the whole nation, of which the Levitical Priesthood had been a limitation and faint representation, was revived by the Apostles in its application to the whole Christian society, and has been, to a certain degree, preserved in the "chrism," or consecration as with the sacred oil of Priesthood, which in the Eastern Church indicates at Confirmation the Priestly consecration of every member of the Christian family.¹

Even the last waving of those Priestly vestments, by which the office was handed on by the Roman governors to the Asmonean family, has left its trace in the language of the new dispensation which swept them away from the world. To be "clothed" with the moral graces of the new faith,² to "endue,"³ that is, to "enrobe" the justice which alone is the true priestly consecration of every Christian soul, whether layman or minister, is the precept of the Christian Apostle, the prayer of the Christian Church.

Thus it is that the long endurance of the most formal and material of all the institutions of Judaism was at once rewarded and rebuked, as in a kind of sublime paradox, by being made the vehicle of the most eternal

¹ See *Quelques Mots, par un Chrétien Orthodoxe*, p. 53.

² Rom. xiii. 14; Col. iii. 9, 10; 1 Peter v. 5.

³ English Prayer Book, Prayer in the Ember weeks.

and spiritual of all Christian truths. No new sense was ever won for old words, at once more alien to their outward sound, or more consonant to their inward meaning, than that which saw in the decaying Priesthood of the Jewish race, the anticipation of the universal consecration of the whole world by Christ and His Apostles. There was a secret correspondence of thought which made this application possible athwart the vast differences of time, and place, and circumstance. The Levitical Priest may have been the least divine of all the Mosaic institutions. The Levitical Book of Chronicles may have been the last and least of all the sacred books. Caiaphas may have been the impersonation of all that was narrowest and basest in the Jewish character. But the loftier purposes to which the Priesthood at times ministered, the occasional strains as of a higher mood that break even through the ceremonial narratives of the Chronicles, the indomitable determination, hereditary in the highest characters of the tribe of Levi, — from Phinehas to Caiaphas, — go far to justify the sacred homage paid to an institution in itself so local and transitory, “Let Thy light and Thy truth be “with Thy holy one.” — “He said unto his father and “unto his mother, I have not seen him, neither did “he acknowledge his brother, nor know his own children.” So the greatest of the tribe of Levi described their stern disregard of any human affection, — the source at once of their strength and of their weakness, of their faith and of their fanaticism. So he described the virtue of a religious ministry in language which may rise far above its original meaning, to denote that high impartiality which rises beyond all earthly and family connections, in consideration of the greater claims of justice, mercy, and truth ; and through the long con-

tinuance of their power and of their name, the benediction upon them, couched in language almost as fierce as their own deeds, has received a fulfilment beyond that which has fallen to the lot of any other earthly organization : “ Bless, LORD, his substance, and accept the work “ of his hands : smite through the loins of them that rise “ against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise “ not again.” ¹

¹ Deut. xxxiii. 8-11. Compare Michaelis's *Laws of Moses*, Art. 52.

LECTURE XXXVII.



ORIGINAL AUTHORITIES.

1. "Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel" (Amaziah), 2 Chr. xxv. 26 ;
Ibid. (Ahaz) xxviii. 26 ; or "of Israel and Judah" (Jotham),
xxvii. 7.
2. "Book of the Chronicles" (literally 'words of the days') of the Kings of
Judah (Amaziah), 2 Kings xiv. 18 ; Ibid. (Azariah) xv. 6 ; Ibid.
(Jotham) ; xv. 36 ; Ibid. (Ahaz) xvi. 19.
3. "Acts (literally 'words') of Uzziah, first and last," by Isaiah, 2 Chr.
xxvi. 22.
4. Joel ; Amos ; Micah ; Zech. ix.—xi. ; Isaiah i. 6 ; ii. 2 ; iv. 6 ; v. 1-14.

LECTURE XXXVII.

THE AGE OF UZZIAH.

THE century on which we now enter represents a vigorous struggle of three able sovereigns, to raise the kingdom from the state of depression into which it had fallen since the death of Jehoshaphat, — a struggle partly successful, but partly frustrated by calamities beyond the control of human power.

The first step was the reconquest of Edom by Amaziah. A victory was gained in the neighborhood of the Dead Sea, Petra was taken, and the prisoners thrown down from the cliffs of their own city. This enterprise had been deemed so important, that Amaziah had, in the first instance, hired Israelite mercenaries to assist him; and when it was accomplished, he was so elated as to challenge the King of Israel to fight for his own.¹ But the proud House of Jehu was not thus to be dealt with. Israel was just beginning to recover from its misfortunes. It could still, as compared with the little kingdom of Judah, take the attitude of the lofty cedar looking down on the humble thistle. A decisive defeat at Bethshemesh reduced Amaziah to submission. The northern wall of Jerusalem was dismantled by the conqueror, and, as usual, the sacred treasures carried off.² For fifteen years Amaziah survived the disgrace; but it rankled in the hearts of his

¹ 2 Chr. xxv. 6-17; 2 Kings xiv. 7, 8.

² 2 Chr. xxv. 18-24; 2 Kings xiv. 9-14.

people. He was murdered at Lachish, a Philistine fortress now rising into importance. His body was brought on horseback to Jerusalem, and buried in state, and by a formal popular election his youthful son Uzziah or Azariah succeeded to the throne.¹

An obscurity rests on Uzziah's reign, the longest except that of Manasseh, the most prosperous Uzziah. excepting that of Jehoshaphat, since the time
B. C.
808-757. of Solomon. In the narrative of the Book of Kings this long period is passed over in almost absolute silence. It is from the Book of Chronicles that we derive our impressions of his splendor. His first endeavor was to follow up his father's conquest of Edom by the re-establishment of the port of Elath, and, consequently, of the commerce on the gulf of Akaba. In the confusion which attended the fall of the House of Jehu, large portions of the east and southeast of the Jordan also fell under his power. The wild Arabian tribes that had shown such an independent spirit against Joram were subdued.² The Ammonites, who had formerly belonged to the Kings of Israel, and had asserted their independence, paid tribute to him.³ Into the southern desert, as far as the frontier of Egypt, "his name spread abroad."⁴ On the west, the turbulent Philistines were attacked, and three of their fortresses razed to the ground.⁵

He consolidated his internal resources in every quarter. The weak point of the walls of Jerusalem which had suffered from the late inroad of Israel he fortified.⁶ He prepared, seemingly with a skill and a zeal unprecedented in the military experience of Judah,

¹ 2 Chr. xxv. 27; xxvi. 1; 2 Kings xiv. 19-21.

² 2 Chr. xxvi. 2-7 (Heb. and LXX.).

³ 2 Chr. xxvi. 7, 8; Isa. xvi. 1.

⁴ 2 Chr. xxvi. 8.

⁵ Ibid. xxvi. 6.

⁶ Ibid. xxvi. 9.

projectiles of all sorts against besiegers, as well as the more common weapons for the soldiers of the army. The army was reorganized. The ancient body of the six hundred heroes of David seem to have been superseded by a more numerous body, bearing the same name, but consisting of the heads of families.¹ The numbering of the fighting population, which in David's reign had been regarded with aversion and awe, was now effected without scruple, under the chief officers of the court and camp.

Nor was he neglectful of the arts of peace. He built towers on the frontier of the desert. He dug wells for the protection and support of his numerous herds of cattle, both in the level country of Philistia and in the downs on the east of the Jordan. He had vineyards on the southern Carmel; "for he loved husbandry."²

In all these departments, his success seemed to correspond to his double name; "the *strength* of Jehovah" (*Azar-iah*) and "the *help* of Jehovah" (*Uzz-iah*); and, accordingly, the Chronicler again and again insists on the preëminent greatness he had attained. "God *helped* him." "He *strengthened* himself exceedingly." "He was *marvellously helped*" . . . "he was *strong*."³ Nor did his prosperity cease at his death. Slight as are the notices of his son Jotham, they are all of the same kind. He fortified the city and Temple. He too built cities on the Judean mountains, and castles and towers in the forests.⁴ He also repressed every effort of revolt amongst the Ammonites, and of him as of his father, though more shortly, it is said "that he was

¹ 2 Chr. xxvi. 11-15.

² Ibid. xxvi. 10.

³ Ibid. xxvi. 7, 8, 13, 15. The word for "help" is *Azar*. The word used

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for "strength," however, is *chezek*, not *Uz*.

⁴ 2 Chr. xxvii. 3, 4.

“strong.”¹ The country swelled with a consciousness of vigor. Its cedars of Lebanon, its oaks of Bashan, its high mountains and hills, covered each with its high tower and fortress, seemed to defy God Himself.² The commerce of Uzziah still loaded the ships of Tarshish with articles of costly and beautiful merchandise.³

But in this prosperity there were some dark spots, of which the Historical Books report hardly anything, but of which the writings of the contemporary Prophets are full, and which led the way to the rapid decline of the

next period on which we shall have to enter.
The locusts.

There was the tremendous, ever memorable, visitation of locusts. It came, like all such visitations, in the season of unusual drought, a drought which passed over the country⁴ like flames of fire. The locusts came from the north.⁵ The brightness of the eastern sky was suddenly darkened as if by thick clouds on the mountain-tops. They moved like a gigantic army; “they all seemed to be impelled by one mind, as if “acting under one word of command;”⁶ they flew as if on horses and chariots from hill to hill; never breaking their ranks, they climbed over the walls of cities, into the windows of houses. The purple vine, the green fig-tree, the gray olive, the scarlet pomegranate, the golden corn, the waving palm, the fragrant citron,⁷ vanished before them, and the trunks and branches were left bare

¹ 2 Chr. xxvii. 5, 8.

² Isa. ii. 13, 14.

³ Ibid. ii. 16.

⁴ Amos iv. 6-9; Joel ii. 1-20. It must have been not earlier than the time of Joash, not later than the time of Uzziah.

⁵ Joel ii. 20. If this reading is correct (which Ewald doubts), it con-

stitutes an exception to the usual direction of the flights of locusts. But it is hardly a sufficient ground for explaining away the locusts into an army of Chaldæans.

⁶ These are the words of an eyewitness (Morier). Comp. Joel ii. 7

⁷ Joel i. 12 (Heb.).

and white by their devouring teeth. What had been but a few moments before like the garden of Eden was turned into a desolate wilderness. The herds¹ of cattle and flocks of sheep so dear to the shepherds of Judah, the husbandmen so dear to King Uzziah, were reduced to starvation. The flour and oil for the "meat offerings" failed;² even the Temple lost its accustomed sacrifices. It was a calamity so great that it seemed as though none could be greater. It "had not been in their days nor in the days of their fathers;"³ "there had never been the like, neither would there be any more after it, even to the years of many generations."

It must have been in the kingdom of Judah what the drought of Ahab's reign had been in the kingdom of Israel. It was a day of Divine judgment, a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.⁴ The harsh blast of the consecrated ram's horn⁵ called an assembly for an extraordinary fast. Not a soul was to be absent. Like the fiery cross, it convened old and young, men and women, mothers with infants at their breasts, the bridegroom and the bride on their bridal day.⁶ All were there stretched in front of the altar. The altar⁷ itself presented the dreariest of all sights, a hearth without its sacred fire, a table spread without its sacred feast. The ^{The fast.} Priestly caste, instead of gathering as usual upon its steps and its platform, were driven, as it were, to the further space; they turned their backs to the dead altar, and lay prostrate gazing towards the Invisible Pres-

¹ Joel i. 18.

² Ibid. i. 9, 10.

³ Ibid. i. 2, 3; ii. 2.

⁴ Ibid. i. 15; ii. 1, 31.

⁵ Ibid. ii. 1 (Heb.).

⁶ Joel i. 14; ii. 15-17.

⁷ Perhaps itself covered with sackcloth. Joel i. 13; comp. Judith iv. 11.

ence within the sanctuary. Instead of the hymns and music which, since the time of David, had entered into their prayers, there was nothing heard but the passionate sobs, and the loud dissonant howls such as only an Eastern hierarchy could utter. Instead of the mass of white mantles, which they usually presented, they were wrapt in black goat's-hair sackcloth,¹ twisted round them not with the brilliant sashes of the priestly attire, but with a rough girdle of the same texture, which they never unbound night or day.² What they wore of their common dress was rent³ asunder or cast off. With bare breasts they waved their black drapery⁴ towards the Temple, and shrieked aloud, "Spare thy people, O Lord!"

This visitation of locusts, if it did not of itself suggest any darker misfortunes, at any rate fell in with constant apprehensions of wars and invasions. Visions of the cruelty of the Ammonites,⁵ fears of the faithlessness of Tyre,⁶ hovered along the horizon; and, along with these, a glimpse into the unknown world of Greece,⁷ to which Jewish children were sold as slaves by their merciless neighbors; a fate to them so dreadful from its uncertainty and distance; to us so interesting from its first combination of the two nations, the Hebrew and the Greek, then such entire strangers, but in the course of ages to become so intimately united in the same great cause. It was to repress these invasions and outrages that the constant preparations of war were heard in the

¹ Joel i. 8, 13. Compare Isa. iii. 24; l. 3; also Judith iv. 14, 15.

² Joel i. 13; 1 Kings xxi. 27.

³ This is implied in the frequent expression "girt upon the loins." Amos viii. 10; Joel i. 8, 13; and Joseph. *B. J.* ii. 15, § 4.

⁴ This and one or more touches, I have ventured to add from the similar passage in Judith iv. 11-15.

⁵ Amos i. 13.

⁶ *Ibid.* i. 9.

⁷ Joel iii. 6.

arsenals of Uzziah, and it was probably the contrast between these necessary defences and the peaceful claims of his beloved husbandry, that suggested the war-cry: "Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong. . . . Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; . . . the press is full, the vats overflow."¹

There was yet another calamity which left a deep impression on the contemporary writers and on later tradition, — "The Earthquake," as it was emphatically called.² The whole Prophetic imagery of the time is colored by the anticipations or recollections of this memorable event. Mountains and valleys are cleft asunder, and melt as in a furnace;³ the earth heaving like the rising waters of the Nile; the sea bursting over the land; the ground shaking and sliding, as, with a succession of shocks, its solid framework reels to and fro like a drunkard. The day is overclouded by thick darkness, without a glimmering of light. There is the roar as of a lion from the caverns of Jerusalem. There is an overthrow like that which overthrew the cities of the plain.⁴

It is strange that of this great convulsion the sole trace discoverable in the Historical Books⁵ is to be found in a combination of incidents preserved only in the later narratives of Josephus⁶ and of the Chronicles,⁷ but which, if they can be trusted, serve to fix its general date and its special results at Jerusalem.

¹ Joel iii. 9-13.

² Amos i. 1.

³ Micah i. 4.

⁴ Amos i. 2; iii. 8; ix. 5; Zech. xiv. 5, 6.

⁵ 2 Kings xv. 5 gives only the

leprosy of the King, and omits not only the account of his exclusion from the Temple, but the subsequent allusions in 2 Chr. xxvi. 21; xxvii. 2.

⁶ *Ant.* ix. 10, § 4.

⁷ 2 Chr. xxvi. 16-21.

It was on some great national solemnity that Uzziah — elated, according to the Chronicler, by his successes, but certainly in conformity with the precedents of David and Solomon — entered the Temple, clothed, according to Josephus, in priestly attire, with the intention of offering incense on the golden altar within the sacred building. Whether it was that, in the changes that had elapsed since the reign of Solomon, the custom had dropped, or whether Uzziah entered upon it in a haughty and irritating spirit, or whether the Priestly order, since their accession of power through the influence of Jehoiada, claimed more than their predecessors had claimed in former times, it is said that the High Priest Azariah,¹ with eighty colleagues, positively forbade the King's entrance, on the ground that this was a privilege peculiar to the Priestly office. At this moment, according to Josephus, the shock of the earthquake broke upon the city. Its more distant effects were visible long afterwards. A huge mass of the mountain on the south-east of Jerusalem rolled down to the spring of Enrogel, and blocked up the approaches of the valley of the Kedron and the royal gardens. Its immediate effect, if rightly reported, was still more striking. As has happened in like calamities, even in Jerusalem itself, the solid building of the Temple rocked, its roof opened,² the darkness of its inner recess was suddenly lighted up by the full blaze of the sun; and as the King looked up towards it, a leprous disfigurement mounted into his face, and rendered necessary that

¹ The name of Azariah the Priest is found nowhere else than in 2 Chr. xxvi. 17, 20, amongst the High

Priests of this time. See 1 Chr. vi. 11.

² See *Sinai and Palestine*, chap. iii. 184.

exclusion which, on the ground of his royal descent, had been doubtful. He retired at once from the Temple, — never again to enter it, — and for the remainder of his life, as one of the accursed race, remained secluded within the public infirmary. His grave was apart from the royal vaults, in the adjacent field.¹

This incident, however interpreted, is the culminating point of the collision, more or less plainly indicated, between the king and the nobles ^{The growth of the Priesthood.} on the one side and the Priesthood on the other, and coincides with the increase of power which, as we have seen, had been accruing since the reign of Joash, and which is confirmed by the contemporary descriptions of the grandeur of the Temple ceremonial. Numbers of victims, fed up for the purpose of sacrifice, were constantly brought to the Temple, — rams, bullocks, lambs, goats. New moons and sabbaths, and solemn assemblies, were faithfully observed.² On occasion of national visitations, the Temple, as we have seen, was filled with worshippers; the Priest, for the first time in the history, occupying the most prominent place in the worship.³

It is probable that this was part of the great and beneficial reaction which must have taken place under Joash and Jehoiada against the ^{The nobles.} licentious and half-pagan worship, which, with the exception of the two reigns of Asa and Jehoshaphat, had prevailed in the kingdom of Judah. It was like the still more rigid revival of the ceremonial and hierarchical system, after the return from the Captivity, when the idolatrous tendency of the Jewish nation was finally uprooted. But as, in that latter

¹ 2 Chr. xxvii. 23.

³ Joel i. 9, 13; ii. 17.

² Isa. i. 13, 14.

instance, it ended in producing an artificial and fanatical spirit, against which Christianity itself in its first rise was a protest at once most awful and most merciful; so, in this earlier instance, these mechanical observances¹ had a constant tendency to foster that divorce between Religion and morality, which in all times has been the bane of the religious world, especially in the East.² The antidote was provided in the signal development of the Prophetical office, which marks the age of Uzziah.

But it was not only as the appointed antagonists to the exaggerations of the sacerdotal system that the Prophets arose with such power at this period. The nobles of Judah first distinctly appear as an important body in the reign of Joash, and it would seem that their luxury and insolence, though less gross than that which we have seen in the corresponding class in Samaria, was yet in a high degree oppressive and scandalous. Bribery was practised in the seats of judgment,³ enormous landed property⁴ was accumulated, against the whole spirit of the Israelite commonwealth. With the determination, and, we may add, the avarice, of their race, they laid their deep schemes at night, and carried them out with their first waking;⁵ they "did evil with both hands;"⁶ they skinned the poor to the very quick, they picked their bones, and ground them to powder. The great ladies of Zion were haughty, and paced along the streets, tossing their necks, and leering with their eyes, walking

¹ It may be that an increase of immorality is intended in 2 Chr. xxvii.

³ But probably it is only the equivalent of the corresponding phrase in 2 Kings xv. 35.

² For this Oriental tendency see a

striking passage in Mills's *Samaritans*, 171.

³ Isa. i. 1; x. 1; Micah vi. 3.

⁴ Isa. v. 8.

⁵ Micah ii. 1; vii. 3.

⁶ Ibid. iii. 2, 3; Isa. ii. 14, 15.

and mincing as they went; covered with tinkling ornaments, chains, bracelets, mantles, veils, of all fashions and sizes.¹

In Judah, as in Ephraim, drunkenness was amongst the higher orders a national vice. They turned their gigantic energy into their debauches.² The music and poetry which David had founded were the accompaniments of those long revels, which lasted from break of day³ till night. When the vineyards were laid waste by the locusts, the selfish tears and cries of the drunkard were amongst the first⁴ that struck the listener's ear.

In the face of these moral and social evils, combined with the physical calamities of the period, a more than ordinary consolation was required. The Proph-
ets.

That consolation was in some degree provided by the wise and upright Kings, especially Uzziah himself. But it was the peculiar characteristic of the Jewish people, that the hope derived from these earthly examples suggested a higher still. It was the glory of the reigns of David and Solomon to have rendered possible the first conception of a future ruler, an anointed king, of their descendants, more beneficent and more splendid than either. It was the glory of the reign of Uzziah that then (as far as we know) this idea was first brought forward again in still firmer and larger proportions, though in less warlike and imperial strains; and from this time onwards the belief in the coming of the Just, Peaceful, Merciful King gained a stronger and stronger hold.

The earliest of the Prophets whose writings have come down to us, and who now, in the decline of the

¹ Isa. ii. 10–20.

³ Isa. v. 11, 12, 21.

² Ibid. v. 22.

⁴ Joel. i. 3.

kingdom of Samaria, were gathering more closely round the throne of Judah, is Joel. He is the connecting link between the older Prophets who are known to us only through their actions and sayings, and the later who are known chiefly through their writings. His mode of address, in its abruptness and directness, is such as we can imagine in Elijah himself. On the occasion of the visitation of locusts before described, it was he who came forward to counsel, or at least to rouse the assembly, — to call the people to the outward expression of repentance. He is full too of the ancient spirit of war and vengeance. But the new and more spiritual element is already at work. Totally unlike as that scene is, in all its external features, to any modern worship, the Prophetic voice of Joel infuses into it a higher strain, that has lasted to our own time. The bare, half-clothed forms, with the clothes hanging round them in strips and tatters, are of the East and Eastern. But, “Rend your *heart* and “not your *garments*”¹ is the true key-note of spiritual worship, fitly prefixed to the public prayers of the most Western churches, as the warning that even the most passionate expressions of external devotion are nothing unless the intention of the heart goes with them. With a glance that reached forwards to the most distant ages, yet had immediate reference to the enlargement of the narrow views of his own time, he foretold, as the chiefest of blessings, that the day was at hand when the Prophetic spirit should no longer be confined to this or that class, but should be poured out upon all humanity, on male and female, on old and young, even on the slaves and humblest inhabitants of Jerusalem.²

¹ Joel ii. 13.

² Joel ii. 28, 29 ; Acts ii. 17.

These words, receiving their fullest accomplishment centuries afterwards, were yet realized almost within that generation by the simultaneous rise of Prophets of all degrees of cultivation, and from every station of life. The few who are known to us are doubtless the representatives of many more, and are enough to indicate the force and variety of the revival which was at work. Some of them were wild enthusiasts,¹ in whom it was difficult to distinguish between the fumes of intoxication and the fervor of inspiration; some played into the hands of the unprincipled Priesthood, whom they were meant to counteract, and affected the black Prophetic dress without any portion of the Prophetic spirit.²

Others there were who lifted up the "burdens" of true Prophetic oracles against the vices of the time.³ Amongst these was one who, by his Amos. humble origin, almost literally fulfilled the words of Joel's description. Amos, the sheepmaster of Tekoa, the gatherer of figs, the Prophet of simple style and rustic imagery, appeared in the close of Uzziah's reign. He kept his sheep and goats on the wild hills of Judea, as Nabal on a grander scale, and David on a humbler scale, had kept them before. His writings are filled with allusions to the deep clefts, the foaming winter torrents that descend to the Dead Sea, to the wild animals, especially to the lions, of this savage district. Although his ministrations were chiefly, as we have seen, in the kingdom of Israel,⁴ yet his strong denunciations of the sacrificial and ceremonial system, as compared with the mild rebuke of Joel, show the growing need and also the

¹ Micah ii. 11.

³ 2 Chr. xxiv. 19, 27 (Heb.).

² Isa. xxix. 9, 10; Micah iii. 5-7,

⁴ See Lecture XXVIII.

11; Jer. v. 31.

growing spirit of the Prophetic order in this its most important function.

Another Prophet, whose character and position is more difficult to unravel, was Zechariah, the Zechariah. favorite Prophet of King Uzziah in his prosperous days. "He sought God in the days of Zechariah, "who had understanding in the visions of the Lord."¹ It cannot be proved, but it is very probable, that this was the Prophet whose writings are now in part comprised under the name of the later Zechariah. Like Amos, he directed his teaching so much towards the northern kingdom that he can hardly be considered in this place. But he is clearly a seer, dwelling at Jerusalem, and in his mind first rises distinctly the image of the Pacific King, not seated on the war-horse, like Asa or Jehoshaphat, in their martial moods, but on the gentle ass, like Uzziah in his earlier and brighter days, just and lowly, speaking peace to the heathen.²

A third Prophet who, like Amos, but in a higher position, came from the rural district of Judah, is Micah. Micah the Morasthite. He began to prophesy after the accession of Jotham. His name,³ even his opening address, was the same, word for word, and letter for letter, as of that older Micaiah, who could prophesy nothing but evil against the Kings of Israel, and who appealed round and round to every single citizen of the commonwealth. He was filled with the evils of his time inward and outward. Like the older⁴ prophets, like the anchorites of Russia, he stripped off his clothes, and went about naked, beating his breast, with wild shrieks

¹ 2 Chr. xxvi. 5.

xxii. 28 (Dr. Pusey's Preface to *Micah*).

² Zech. ix. 9. See Lecture XXXIV.

⁴ 1 Sam. xix. 24. See *Lectures on Eastern Church*, p. 393.

³ Mica-jahu, "who is like Jehovah?" Compare Micah i. 1; 1 Kings

and lamentations, like the long piteous cry of the jackal, like the fearful screech¹ of the ostrich. His own immediate neighborhood, in the maritime plain, is the first scene of his warnings.² Village³ after village he dooms to destruction. Their familiar names appear to carry with them their death-warrant. His eye and ear are haunted by the images of earthquakes and even of volcanoes. He is struck with horror at the drunkenness,⁴ the robbery, the folly, the oppression of his country. Not only from nobles and priests, but from his own Prophetic⁵ order, he turns away in disgust. One remarkable instance⁶ of such an explosion we shall meet in the reign of Hezekiah. Wild as he is in appearance, and terrible in his denunciations, there are in him, beyond any of the Lesser Prophets of this time, "soul-stirring recollections, "And hopes their bright reflections." On him, first of the Prophets, the events of the past history crowd in vivid succession, even as we ourselves see them in the present sacred books, — Abraham and Jacob,⁷ the wonders⁸ of the Exodus, the interview⁹ of Balaam and Balak, the delightful stay of the pastoral tribes¹⁰ in the forests beyond the Jordan on the eve of the conquest. To him more distinctly than to any previous Prophet, comes the assurance that, in spite of all her calamities and her crimes, Jerusalem shall become the capital of a vast spiritual and intellectual empire,¹¹ and that a mighty Conqueror shall shatter in pieces all the obstacles¹² that close up the free energies of his people ; that a Ruler¹³

¹ Micah i. 8 (Dr. Pusey, *Pref.*).

² Micah i. 10–15.

³ Ibid. i. 13–16 (see Dr. Pusey's *Pref.* p. 293).

⁴ Ibid. ii. 1, 8, 11 ; iii. 1.

⁵ Ibid. iii. 5–8.

⁶ See Lecture XXXVIII.

⁷ Micah vii. 20.

⁸ Micah vi. 4 ; vii. 15.

⁹ Ibid. vi. 4, 5.

¹⁰ Ibid. ii. 12 ; vii. 14.

¹¹ Ibid. iii. 1–4.

¹² Ibid. ii. 13 (?). See Ewald, *Propheten*, p. 333.

¹³ Micah v. 1–4.

shall come, even in his own time, who shall set all things right, and who, though having a past in the most ancient days, shall be born in the Prophet's own immediate neighborhood, the small insignificant village of Bethlehem. He gives to the warlike cry of Joel a turn which henceforth becomes its authorized rendering; when, instead of a reign of war, he anticipates universal peace: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks."¹ "There will be a shepherd more royal even than David;² a peace even more universal than that of Solomon."³

He trusts with unshaken faith in the gracious future which God has in store for his nation and for himself. "Who is a God like Thee,⁴ pardoning iniquities, and passing by transgressions for the remnant of His heritage. He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy. He will again have compassion upon us. He will subdue our iniquities; yea, Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." And his last words are those which, centuries afterwards, were caught up by the aged Priest whose song unites the Old and New Testaments⁵ together. "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn;" to send forth a second David, the mighty Child, whose unknown mother is already travailing for his birth.

Exactly contemporary with Micah — it is hard to say whether older or younger⁶ — is a still greater Prophet, who stands out at once as the repre-

Isaiah.

¹ Micah iv. 2, comp. Joel iii. 10. Jehovah?" See Dr. Pusey, *Pref.* p.

² Ibid. ii. 12; iv. 6, 8; v. 4, 5; 288.

vii. 14.

⁵ Micah vii. 18–20; Luke i. 72,

³ Ibid. iv. 3.

73.

⁴ Ibid. vii. 18. Possibly in allusion to his name Micaiah, "who is as

⁶ Ewald makes him to be younger, Dr. Pusey to be older.

sentative of his own age, and yet as a universal teacher of mankind. Whilst the other Prophets of this period are known only to the by-paths of theology, in the quaint text of remote preachers, Isaiah is a household word everywhere. This is the first point in the history of the kingdom of Judah, where, as in common ecclesiastical history, we are able to measure the periods by the names rather of distinguished teachers than of Kings or Chief Priests. In the earlier stages of the history of Judah there was no Prophet of magnitude equal to Jehoshaphat, or Jehoiada, or Uzziah. But in the period on which we now enter there is no King or Priest of magnitude equal to Isaiah, and he was succeeded by two others, only, if at all, inferior to himself, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. For the first time since Elisha we have a Prophet, of whose life and aspect we can be said to have any details. He was statesman as well as Prophet. He lived not in the remote villages of Judah like Micah, or wandering over hill and dale like Elijah and Amos, but in the centre of all political life and activity. His whole thoughts take the color of Jerusalem. He is the first Prophet specially attached to the capital¹ and the court. He was, according to Jewish tradition,² the cousin of Uzziah, his father Amoz being held to be a younger son of Joash. He wrote Uzziah's life;³ and his first Prophecies, beginning in the close of that reign, illustrate the reign of Jotham, as well as of the three succeeding sovereigns. His individual and domestic life was a kind of impersonation of the Prophetic office. His wife was a Prophetess.⁴ According to a practice which seems to have prevailed throughout his career, as

¹ Ewald, *Propheten*, p. 168.

³ 2 Chr. xxvi. 22.

² See the quotations in Gesenius,

⁴ Isa. viii. 3.

Jesaja, Einl. § 1.

through that of his contemporary Hosea, he himself and his children all bear Prophetic names: "Behold I and "the children whom the Lord hath given me are for a "sign and a wonder in Israel from the Lord of Hosts."¹ He had a circle of disciples,² probably of Prophets, in whom his spirit was long continued. One such, unknown except through his writings,³ in all probability has, if so be, under the shadow of his name, exercised a still wider influence than Isaiah himself. Legends, apocryphal books, have gathered round him as round another Solomon or another Elijah. Of no other book of the Old Testament, except the Psalter, have the subsequent effects in the world been so marked, or the principles so fruitful of results for the future. In fact his appearance was a new step in the Prophetic dispensation. The length of his life, the grandeur of his social position, gave a force to what he said, beyond what was possible in the fleeting addresses of the humbler Prophets who had preceded him. There is a royal air in his attitude, in his movements, in the sweep of his vision, which commands attention. He was at once "great and "faithful" in his "vision."⁴ Nothing escapes him in the events of his time. The older Prophetic writings are worked up by him into his own words. He does not break with the past. He is not ashamed of building on the foundation of those who have gone before him. All that there is of general instruction in Joel, Micah, or Amos, is reproduced in Isaiah. But his style has its own marked peculiarity and novelty. The fierce impassioned addresses of Joel and Nahum, the abrupt strokes, the contorted turns of Hosea and Amos, give

¹ Isaiah viii. 18.

² Ibid. viii. 16.

³ Isaiah xl.—lxvi. See Lecture XL.

⁴ Ecclus. xlviii. 22.

way to something more of a continuous flow, where stanza succeeds to stanza, and canto to canto, with almost a natural sequence. Full of imagery as is his poetry, it still has a simplicity which was at that time so rare as to provoke the satire of the more popular Prophets. They, pushing to an excess the nervous rhetoric of their predecessors, could not bear, as they expressed it, to be treated like children. "Whom shall he teach knowledge, and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts!" Those constant recurrences of the general truths of spiritual religion, majestic in their plainness, seemed to them mere commonplace repetitions;—"precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little;" or as appears still more strongly in the original,¹ "*tsav la-tsav — tsav la-tsav — kav la-kav — kav la-kav, — ze'ir sham, ze'ir sham.*" It is the universal complaint of the shallow inflated rhetoricians of the professedly religious world against original genius and apostolic simplicity, the complaint of the babblers of Ephesus against St. John, the protest of all scholastic and pedantic systems against the freeness and the breadth of a Greater than John or Isaiah. Such divine utterances have always appeared defective, and unimpassioned, and indefinite, in the ears of those who crave for wilder excitement and more elaborate systems, but have no less found, for that very reason, a sure response in the childlike, genuine, natural, soul of every age.

The special objects of Isaiah's mission will appear as we pass through his history. But the general objects are best indicated in the account² which he

¹ Isa. xxviii. 9-13 (Ewald).

² Isa. vi.

himself has left us of his call, or (as we should now describe it) his conversion, to the Prophetical office.

“In the year that King Uzziah died,” in the last year of that long reign of fifty-two years, as the life of the aged King, now on the verge of seventy, was drawing to its close in the retirement of the house of lepers, the young Isaiah was, or in vision seemed to be, in the court of the Temple. He stood at the gate of the porch, and gazed straight into the Holy Place, and into the Holy of Holies itself. All the intervening obstacles were removed. The great gates of cedar-wood were thrown open, the many-colored veil that hung before the innermost sanctuary was drawn aside, and deep within was a throne as of a King, high and lifted up, towering as if into the sky. What was the form that sat thereon, here, as elsewhere, the Scripture forbears to describe. Only by outward and inferior images, as to us by secondary causes, could the Divine Essence be expressed. The long drapery of His train filled the Temple, as “His glory fills the earth.” Around the throne, as the cherubs on each side of the mercy-seat, as the guards round the King, with head and feet veiled, figures floating like flying serpents,¹ themselves glowing with the glory of which they were a part, whilst vast wings enfolded their faces and their feet, and supported them in mid-air round the throne. From side to side² went up a hymn of praise, which has since been incorporated in the worship of Christendom, and which expressed that He was there who bore

¹ *Saraph*. Compare the Brazen Serpent used at this time (2 Kings xviii. 4). The word *saraph* is used in Isaiah, and for the fiery serpents in the wilderness (Num. xxi. 6;

Deut. viii. 15), and is used nowhere else.

² Neither beginning till the other gave permission, as in the synagogues (Rashi, in Gesenius, *Jesaja*, p. 121).

the great Name by which God was specially known in the period of the Jewish monarchy and in the Prophetical order,¹ — “the Lord of Hosts.” The sound rang like thunder to the extremity of the Temple. The pillars of the gateway trembled,² as if in another earthquake-shock, and the whole building within grew dark as with the smoke of a vast sacrifice. It was a sight and sound which the youthful Isaiah recognized at once as the intimation of Divinity. It was the revelation of the Divine Presence to him, as that of the Burning Bush to Moses, or of the Still Small Voice to Elijah, — the inevitable prelude to a Prophetic mission, couched in the form most congenial to his own character and situation. To him, the Royal Prophet of Jerusalem, this manifestation of Royal splendor was the almost necessary vesture in which the Spiritual Truth was to be clothed. All his own sins, — we know not what they were, — and the sins of his nation, — as we know them from himself and the contemporary Prophets, — passed before him, and he said, “Woe is me, for I am lost, because I am a “man of unclean lips, and I dwell amongst a people “of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, “the Lord of Hosts.” A Rabbinical tradition, probably baseless, took possession very early of the Christian Church, that his sin had been an acquiescence in the sin of Uzziah, and that the gift of prophecy then removed from him was now to be restored.³ But his own words rather lead to the impression

¹ The word is used 13 times in the Books of Samuel, 62 times in Isaiah, 65 times in Jeremiah, but only 3 times in the Chronicles (Mr. Twisleton on the Books of Samuel, *Dict. of the Bible*). See Lecture XXIII.

² It is supposed to be the Divine judgment and earthquake on Uzziah (Rashi, in Gesenius, p. 121).

³ See Gesenius on Isa. vi., pp. 5, 6, 7, 120, 254, 261.

that it was his language, and the language of his countrymen, that was to blame: "a foul-mouthed son of a foul-mouthed race." On these defiled lips, therefore, the purifying touch was laid. From the flaming altar, the flaming seraph brought a flaming coal. This was the creation, so to speak, of that marvellous style which has entranced the world; the burning furnace¹ which warms, as with a central fire, every variety of his addresses. Then came the Voice from the sanctuary, saying, "Whom shall I send, who will go for Us?" With unhesitating devotion, the youth replied, "Here am I; send me." In the words that follow is represented the whole of the Prophet's career. First, he is forewarned of the forlorn hopelessness of his mission. The louder and more earnest is his cry, the less will they hear and understand, — the more clearly he sets the vision of truth before them, the less will they see. "Make the heart of this people gross, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted and healed."² These mournful words, well known to us through their fivefold³ repetition in the New Testament as the description of the Jewish people in its latest stage of decay, were doubtless true in the highest degree of that wayward generation to which Isaiah was called to speak. His spirit sank within him, and he asked, "O Lord, how long — Usquequo, Domine?" The reply unfolded at once the darker and the brighter side of the future. Not till suc-

¹ "Si quis penitus posset inspicere afflatus Prophetæ, videret in singulis verbis caminos ignis et vehementissimos ardores esse." (Luther, *Opp.* iii. p. 286.)

² Isa. vi. 10.

³ Matt. xiii. 13; Mark iv. 12; Luke viii. 10; John xii. 39; Acts xxviii. 25.

cessive invasions had wasted the cities, not till the houses had been left without a human being within them, not till the land had been desolate with desolation, would a better hope dawn; not till the invasions of Pekah and Sennacherib had done their work, not till ten out of the twelve tribes had been removed far away, and there should have been a great forsaking in the midst of the land, would he be relieved from the necessity of delivering his stern, but fruitless, warnings, against the idolatry, the dulness, the injustice of his people. But widely spread and deeply seated as was the national corruption, there was still a sound portion left, which would live on and flourish. As the aged oak or terebinth of Palestine may be shattered, and cut down to the very roots, and yet out of the withered stump a new shoot may spring forth, and grow into a mighty and vigorous tree, so is the holy seed, the faithful few, of the chosen people.¹ This is the true consolation of all Ecclesiastical History. It is a thought which is but little recognized in its earlier and ruder stages, when the inward and outward are easily confounded together. But it is the very message of life to a more refined and complex age, and it was the key-note to the whole of Isaiah's prophecies. It had, indeed, been dimly indicated to Elijah, in the promise of the few who had not bowed the knee to Baal, and in the still small whisper which was greater than thunder, earthquake, and fire. But in Isaiah's time it first, if we may say so, became a living doctrine of the Jewish Church, and through him an inheritance of the Christian Church. "*A remnant*" — the remnant."² This was his watchword. "The

¹ See Isa. vi. 13.

jects of the Day, p. 218. Ewald,

² Ibid. x. 20; xi. 11, 16; xxviii. *Propheten*, 169.

5. Dr. Newman's *Sermons, On Sub-*

“remnant shall return (*shear-jashub*).” This was the truth constantly personified before him in the name of his eldest son. A remnant of good in the mass of corruption, a remnant saved from the destructive invasions of Assyria, a burst of spring-time in the Reformation of Hezekiah; and, far away in the distant future, a rod out of the stem, the worn-out stem of Jesse, — a branch, a faithful branch, out of the withered root of David; “and the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly, even with joy and singing, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”¹

Such was the hope and trust which sustained the Prophet through his sixty years of toil and conflict. In the weakness of Ahaz, in the calamities of Hezekiah, under the tyranny of Manasseh, Isaiah remained firm and steadfast to the end. Wider and wider his views opened, as the nearer prospects of his country grew darker and darker. First of the Prophets, he and those who followed him seized with unreserved confidence the mighty thought, that not in the chosen people, so much as in the nations outside of it, was to be found the ultimate well-being of man, the surest favor of God. Truly might the Apostle say that Isaiah was “very bold,” — “bold² beyond” all that had gone before him — in enlarging the boundaries of the Church; bold with that boldness, and large with that largeness of view, which so far from weakening the hold on things divine, strengthens it to a degree unknown in less comprehensive minds. For to him also, with a distinctness which makes all other anticipations look pale in comparison, a distinctness³ which grew with his advancing

The mission
of Isaiah.

¹ Isa. xi. 1; xxxv. 1.

² Rom. x. 20, ἀποτολμή.

³ Ewald, *Propheten*, 169, 170.

years, was revealed the coming of a Son of David, who should restore the royal house of Judah and gather the nations under its sceptre. If some of these predictions belong to that phase of the Israelite hope of an earthly empire, which was doomed to disappointment and reversal, yet the larger part point to a glory which has been more than realized. Lineament after lineament of that Divine Ruler was gradually drawn by Isaiah or his scholars, until at last a Figure stands forth, so marvelously combined of power and gentleness and suffering, as to present in the united proportions of his descriptions the moral features of an historical Person, such as has been, by universal confession, known once, and once only, in the subsequent annals of the world.

The task laid upon the Prophet was difficult, the times were dark. But his reward has been that, in spite of the opposition, the contempt, and the ridicule of his contemporaries, he has in after ages been regarded as the messenger not of sad but of glad tidings, the Evangelical Prophet, the Prophet of the Gospel, in accordance with the meaning of his own name, which he himself regarded as charged with Prophetic significance,¹ — “the Divine Salvation.”

No other Prophet is so frequently cited in the New Testament, for none other so nearly comes up to the Spirit of Christ and the Apostles. No other single teacher of the Jewish Church has so worked his way into the heart of Christendom. When Augustine asked Ambrose which of the sacred books was best to be studied after his conversion, the answer was “Isaiah.” The greatest musical composition of modern times, embodying more than any single confession of faith the sentiments of the whole Christian Church, is based in far the

¹ Isa. viii. 18. See Gesenius, i. p. 3.

larger part on the Prophecies of Isaiah. The wild tribes of New Zealand seized his magnificent strains as if belonging to their own national songs, and chanted them from hill to hill, with all the delight of a newly discovered treasure.¹ And as in his age, so in our own, he must be preëminently regarded as “the bard rapt into “future times.”² None other of ancient days so fully shared with the modern philosopher, or reformer, or pastor, the sorrowful yet exalted privilege of standing, as we say, “in advance of his age,” “before his time.” Through his prophetic gaze we may look forward across a dark and stormy present to the onward destiny of our race, which must also be the hope of each aspiring soul, — “when the eyes of them that see shall not be dim — “when the ears of them that hear shall hearken — when “the vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the “churl said to be bountiful — when the liberal shall de- “vise liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand “— when Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah “shall not vex Ephraim — when thine eyes shall behold “the King in his beauty, and see the land that is very “far off.”³

¹ So I have been informed by Sir G. Grey, the governor of New Zealand.

² Pope's *Messiah*.

³ Isa. xxxii. 3, 5, 8; xi. 13; xxxiii. 17.

LECTURE XXXVIII.

HEZEKIAH.

WITH the death of Jotham, a change passed over the face of the Jewish monarchy. The hollow religion which had called forth the warnings of Isaiah, during the latest years of Uzziah and during the reign of Jotham, was unable to hold its ground against the heathen worship, with which the vices of the Jewish aristocracy naturally allied themselves. The increasing power and neighborhood of Assyria brought new divinities and new forms of worship into view. Of this superstition, the King himself was the centre. He ^{Ahaz, B. C. 741-726.} seems, without fanaticism, to have had a mania for foreign religious practices. Not only did he employ to the utmost all the existing sanctuaries,¹ but he introduced new ones in every direction. The worship of Molech, the savage god of Ammon, was now established not only on the heights of Olivet, but in the valley of Hinnom,² in a spot known by the name of Tophet,³ close under the walls of Jerusalem. There the brazen statue of the god was erected, with the furnace⁴ within or at its feet, into which the children were thrown. To this dreadful form of human sacrifice Ahaz gave the highest sanction by the devotion of one or more of his sons.⁵

1 2 Chr. xxviii. 4; 2 Kings xvi. 3.

2 2 Kings xvi. 3.

3 Isa. xxx. 33 (Heb.).

4 Kimchi on 2 Kings xxiii. 10; and

comp. Diod. Sic. xx. 14 (*Dict. of Bible, MOLECH*).

5 2 Kings xvi. 3; 2 Chr. xxviii. 3.

To this extreme conclusion had the sacrificial system of the previous reigns been carried, and it was this which in all probability provoked from Micah the Prophetic protest in a form which, though couched in language drawn from the ancient history of the people (perhaps from that of an alien and heathen nation), almost anticipates the Christian system. Not the thousand rams at the altar, nor the torrents of sacred oil, not even the sacrifice of the first-born son, could so propitiate the Divine favor as justice, mercy, and faith.¹ As Tetzels called forth Luther, so it may almost be said that to the extreme superstition of Ahaz we are indebted for one of the most sublime and impassioned declarations of spiritual religion that the Old Testament contains.

More innocent customs or superstitions appeared in every part of the country and city. Golden and silver statues glittered throughout Judea. Soothsayers came from the far East; wizards, familiar spirits, ghosts, were consulted, even by the most outwardly religious.² Altars were planted in the corners of the streets. In the palace was raised a flight of steps, on which the sun's shadow fell; in all probability suggested by some Babylonian traveller.³ To the Temple itself the same Oriental influences penetrated, and even materially affected the structure and appearance of the building. On its roof were erected little altars, apparently for the worship of the heavenly bodies of the Zodiac.⁴ At the entrance of its court were kept chariots dedicated to the sun, with their sacred white horses, as in Persia and Assyria, ready to be harnessed on great occasions.⁵ The

¹ Micah vi. 6-9. See Lecture

⁴ 2 Kings xxiii. 5, 12; translated

² Micah vi. 6-9. See Lecture

"planets" in verse 5.

VIII.

⁵ 2 Kings xxiii. 11; Quint. Curt.

³ Ibid. xxxviii. 8. Comp. Herodot. ii. 109.

iii. 3; Herod. i. 189. See Thenius, *ad loc.*

King's chief work, and that apparently on which he most prided himself, was the new altar, framed after the model of one which he had seen at Damascus.¹ The High Priest Urijah, the friend of Isaiah, lent himself to this innovation. The venerable altar of David, which had always been somewhat out of keeping with the magnificence of the Temple, was now displaced, and remained apart on the north side of the Temple court, reserved for any use which the innovating King might think fit to make of it. To the new altar he devoted all his reverence, and, with all the royal state of the ancient sacrifices, he came there morning and evening to present in his own person the accustomed offerings.² With these additions to the grandeur of the Temple worship, were combined changes of a very different kind. Not only were sacred treasures confiscated, as often before, to appease the invaders, but the sacred furniture and vessels themselves despoiled. The brazen bulls, which stood beneath the great basin, were taken away, and the basin placed on a pedestal of stone. The curious brazen engines of the lesser basins, as well as the canopy of brass over the royal stand, and the brazen ornaments of the royal entrance, were removed,³ as if belonging to an inferior age. Towards the end of his reign, the great doors of the Temple were shut up, the sacred lamps were not lighted,⁴ nor incense offered inside, and the whole interior left to decay and neglect.⁵

It was not without strong outward pressure that

1 2 Kings xvi. 10–16. The whole of this is omitted in 2 Chr. xxviii. still celebrated as a fast on the 18th of Ab (end of July or beginning of August).

2 2 Kings xvi. 15 (Heb.).

3 Ibid. xvi. 17, 18.

5 2 Chr. xxviii. 24; xxix. 3, 7, 16,

4 The closing of the Temple gates and extinction of the candlesticks is 17.

these spoliations were made. The neighboring nations had taken advantage of the weak character of the young prince to assert again an independence which the vigorous rule of the three previous kings had kept at bay. Now took place that formidable union of Syria with Israel which has been before described. Far down to the Gulf of Akaba the shock of the invasion was felt. Elath, the favorite seaport of Jehoshaphat and Uzziah, was recovered from Judah and made over to the adjacent Edomites.¹

The Syrian war.

Jerusalem itself was threatened; a usurper was to be established on the throne of David.² The alarm was extreme in the royal family when the news of the hostile alliance came. It was as if a hurricane had passed over the city, and every heart heaved and rustled in the wind of the general alarm.³ The King and the nobles,⁴ in their survey of the weak points in the fortifications and water-works of the city,⁵ had reached a well-known public spot just outside the city walls,⁶ when Isaiah, with his eldest son, suddenly appeared before them. The importance of the crisis was worthy of the Prophet's decisive messages. In words, and by signs, now difficult to decipher, he foretold the rapid destruction of the two hostile powers. There was to be a sudden and wonderful birth of a child, bearing a Divine name, whose childhood should not be finished before the deliverance⁷ came. The deliverance was to appear unexpectedly, through the coming of the distant Assyrians.⁸ There was inscribed in large letters, in the public square of the city, *Rapid*

¹ 2 Kings xvi. 6 (LXX.).

² Isa. vii. 6.

³ Ibid. vii. 2.

⁴ Ibid. vii. 13.

⁵ Ibid. vii. 3.

⁶ Isa. vii. 3; xxxvi. 2; 2 Kings xviii. 17, 26.

⁷ Isa. vii. 14-16 (see Ewald and Gesenius, *ad loc.*).

⁸ Ibid. 17-20.

spoiler, speedy prey, which within the year became the name of another child of the Prophet.¹ An heir was to spring up to the throne of David, combining all the noblest qualities of God and man.² It is the same amalgamation of the highest and the widest hopes with contemporary events, which is familiar to us through the fourth Eclogue of Virgil, in part, possibly, founded on this very passage. The expectation of an actual child within a short time, and the endeavor to concentrate on that child the far loftier aspirations with which, as it were, the air was full, is almost the same in the Hebrew Prophet and the Roman poet.³ In Isaiah's case the immediate prediction was fulfilled. There was a severe battle, in which three of the chief officers of the Court were killed,⁴ and many prisoners taken; but it was the last of such attacks from the neighbor states. The appearance of the Assyrians on the scene, and the readiness of Ahaz to purchase their alliance,

¹ Isa. viii. 1-4.

² Ibid. ix. 1-6.

³ See Merivale's *History of the Romans under the Empire*, iii. 231. "Scribonia was about to give a child to Octavius, Octavia to Antonius. Pollio had also two sons born nearly at the same time. . . . The near coincidence of all these distinguished births is connected with one of the most intricate questions of literary history. In his fourth Eclogue, addressed to Pollio, Virgil celebrates the peace of Brundisium, and anticipates apparently the birth of a wondrous boy who shall restore the Saturnian age of gold. . . . We are impelled to inquire to whom among the most illustrious offsprings of this auspicious age the poet's glowing

language may be fitly referred. . . .

After all their claims have been weighed and dismissed, we are still at a loss for an object to whom, in the mind of the writer, the sublime vaticination can be consistently applied." This might be said almost word for word of the difficulty of adjusting the claims of the children of Isaiah's time — whether his own sons or the prince Hezekiah — with the exalted predictions of the Divine Child in Isa. vii. 14-20; ix. 6, 7. See Ewald, *Proph.* 213.

⁴ 2 Chr. xxviii. 5-15. For a defence of this account, and a good statement of the importance of the war, see Caspari, *Ueber den Syrisch-Ephraimitische Krieg*, p. 28-72.

at once broke the power of Damascus, and in the next reign destroyed no less the nearer power of Israel.

But Judah itself would have been subjected to its powerful ally, had not Ahaz been succeeded by a prince of a very different character from himself.

The reign of Hezekiah is the culminating point of interest in the history of the Kings of Judah.

Whether or not the contemporary prophecies, foretelling the birth of a Divine heir to the throne, contained any reference to the son of Ahaz, then a mere child, it is certain that no other Prince since the death of David could so well have answered to them. There is a strong Jewish tradition that he applied to himself, not only the predictions of Isaiah, but the 20th and 110th Psalms.¹ It was a saying of Hillel that there would be no Messiah for Israel in future times, because He had already appeared in Hezekiah. He himself, it was said, with the expectation of immortality thus engendered, took no care to marry or secure the succession till startled by his alarming illness. In point of fact, he was the centre of the highest Prophetic influence which had appeared since Elijah. Isaiah was his constant counsellor. His maternal grandfather Zachariah² may have been not improbably the favorite Prophet of Uzziah. First of the royal family since David, he was himself a poet.³ He gives the first distinct example of an attempt to collect the sacred books of his country. By his orders a large part⁴ of the Proverbs of Solomon, — to which Jewish tradition⁵ adds the Prophecies of Isaiah, the

¹ Cosmas Indicopleustes (*Coll. Patr.* ii. 301); Justin. *Dial. c. Tryph.*; Tertull. *adv. Marc.* v. 9; Pearson, *On the Creed*, p. 112.

² 2 Kings xviii. 2.

³ Isa. xxxviii. 9–20.

⁴ Prov. xxv. 1.

⁵ See the statement from the Talmud, in Gesenius, *Jesaja*, i. p. 16.

Book of Ecclesiastes, and the Canticles — were written out and preserved. The Psalms of David,¹ and of Asaph the seer, the musical services prescribed by David and by David's two attendant Prophets, Gad and Nathan, were revived by him. The services of the Temple, and the instructions established by Jehoshaphat,² were restored. The same antiquarian turn, if one may so call it, showed itself in the continuance of his father's passion for collecting costly works of art. The palace at Jerusalem was a storehouse of gold, silver, and jewels; the porch of the palace was once more hung with splendid shields.³ Even in the changes which he introduced into the Temple, he spared all the astrological⁴ altars and foreign curiosities which Ahaz had erected. Both in the capital and the country, he promoted the arts of peace like his ancestor Uzziah. Towers and enclosures⁵ sprang up for the vast herds and flocks of the pastoral districts. The vineyards, olive-yards, and cornfields were again cultivated. The towers and fortifications⁶ of Jerusalem, the supply of water to the town, both by aqueduct from without, and by a reservoir hewn out of the solid rock, were for centuries connected with his name. "Peace⁷ and truth" were the watchwords of his reign. When the merits of the Kings were summed up after the fall of the monarchy, Hezekiah was, by a deliberate judgment, put at the very top. There was, "after him, none like him among the Kings of Judah, nor "any that was before him."⁸

1 2 Chr. xxix. 25, 31.

2 Ibid. xxxi. 4; comp. xvii. 9.

3 Ibid. xxxii. 27; 2 Kings xx. 13; Ps. lxxvi. 3.

4 2 Kings xxiii. 12.

5 2 Chr. xxxii. 28, 29.

6 2 Chr. xxxii. 5; 2 Kings xx. 20;

Ps. xlviii. 13; Ecclus. xlviii. 17;

compare Ps. lxxxvii. 7; Isa. xii. 3.

7 2 Kings xx. 19.

8 Ibid. xviii. 5.

In descending from this general picture to the details of the reign, the difficulty of any consistent¹ chronological arrangement of the events is almost insuperable. It will be best to take them as they occur in the sacred narrative, open to such corrections as the various discoveries of chronologers may impose.

1. The "Conversion" of Hezekiah, as in modern times it would be called, was due not to Isaiah, but to a less famous contemporary. It would seem that the corrupt state of morals and religion, against which the Prophets of the age of Uzziah complained, continued into Hezekiah's reign. Suddenly, in the midst of an assembly, in which the King himself was present, there appeared the startling apparition, in the simplicity of his savage nakedness, of the Prophet Micah.² With the sharp, abrupt, piercing cry peculiar to his manner, he commanded each class to hear him. The people listened with awe to the bitter satire with which the nobles were described as preparing their cannibal feast out of the flesh and bones of the poor.³ They heard him denounce the unholy compact then first begun between the mercenary Priests and the traitor Prophets. They were startled by the energy with which he turned fiercely round on his own Prophetic order for selling their divinations at a price, and their blessing or their threats according to the good

¹ The natural inference from 2 Kings xx. 6 would be, that the illness and the embassy from Babylon preceded the invasion of Sennacherib, which is required also by the alleged dates derived from the Assyrian inscriptions (see Mr. Rawlinson's article on SENNACHERIB, in the *Dictionary of the Bible*). In that case the repentance described in Jer. xxvi. 19

might coincide with the repentance in 2 Chr. xxxii. 26. On the other hand, this transposition is inconsistent not only with the present order of the chapters, but with the express statements of 2 Kings xviii. 13; xx. 1; 2 Chr. xxxiii. 24; Isa. xxxvi. 1.

² Jer. xxvi. 18, 19. See Dr. Pusey on MICAH, 290.

³ Micah iii. 1-4.

eating with which their followers supplied them. They heard him hail as a blessing the entire extinction of the order; when its sun should set, when the sun should go down over the Prophets, and the day should be night over them.¹ They must have been yet more amazed when he attacked the popular use even of the doctrine of his great contemporary, Isaiah. "God with us," "Immanu-El," the pledge of the invincibility of Zion, had passed into an exaggerated and unmeaning dogma. "They lean upon Jehovah, saying, Is not Jehovah in the midst of us?"² No calamity shall come upon us." It was to contradict this in the most direct manner that he drew his picture of the crowded fortress of Zion turned into a ploughed field, and the stately palaces of Jerusalem sunk into a heap of ruins, and the rocky site of the Temple once more like a mountain forest.³ There was a pause when he concluded. It would seem as if for a moment an indignant King and people would rise and crush the audacious seer. But Hezekiah was not a mere tool in the hands of nobles, or priests, or prophets. Micah was left unscathed, and the dark prediction was never fulfilled. "The Lord repented Him of the evil which He had pronounced against them." And even in the Prophet's own lifetime — it may be almost immediately after his warning — succeeded the promise of a prosperity before unknown; when the nation should⁴ in peace be like the gentle dew, in war like the lion in forest and fold, or like a fierce bull treading down his

¹ Micah iii. 5-7.

² Ibid. iii. 11, 12.

³ Jer. xxvi. 18, 19. The destruction which was then threatened has never been completely fulfilled. Part of the southeast portion of the city has for several centuries been arable

land; but the rest has always been within the walls. In the Maccabæan wars (1 Macc. iv. 38) the Temple courts were overgrown with shrubs, but this has never been the case since.

⁴ Micah iv. 13; v. 7, 8.

enemies on the threshing-floor, with horns of iron and hoofs of brass.

The wild dirge of Micah had been aimed against the moral evils of the nation. The neglect of the Temple, the total abeyance of the Mosaic ritual, were as nothing in his eyes. On the other hand, of any moral reformation the Chronicler tells us nothing. But the outward reformation which he describes was doubtless the expression of an inward change also.

The great doors of the Temple so long closed were opened. The King himself took the command. The Priests hung back from the revolution which swept away the neglect which the head of their order, Urijah, must in some measure have countenanced. But the Levites, more closely connected with the general education of the people, lent themselves heartily to the work. Both joined in the ceremonial of a vast sacrifice offered by the King and Princes¹ in expiation of the national guilt. The people went along with the change, sudden as it was.

Immediately on this followed the revival of the Pass-
The Pass- over. over, of which no celebration had been recorded since the time of Joshua. Like the Feast of Tabernacles, at the dedication of Solomon's Temple, it was commemorated by the addition of a second week of rejoicing.² Not only the whole population of the southern kingdom attended it, but, although reluctantly,³ some even of the northern, especially of the most northern, parts.⁴ It was characteristic of the true spirit of the religion of David, that, when these unusual guests arrived, without the prescribed ablutions, the King over-

¹ 2 Chr. xxix. 27, 29, 30. The whole of this restoration is omitted in the Books of Kings.

² 2 Chr. xxx. 23.

³ Joseph. *Ant.* ix. 13, § 2.

⁴ 2 Chr. xxx. 11.

looked it in consideration of their pure intentions. "The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary."¹

From this restoration of the worship of JEHOVAH, Hezekiah proceeded to the removal of superstitions which had existed from the earliest times. The destruction of the High Places, Beside the Temple worship in Jerusalem, had descended what may be called the rural worship of the "high places,"² — at Bethel,³ at Beersheba,⁴ at Moriah,⁵ on the mountains of Gilead,⁶ at Ophrah, on the hills of Dan, at Mizpeh and Ramah, on the top of Olivet,⁷ on Mount Carmel,⁸ at Gibeon.⁹ They had been sanctioned by the Patriarchs, by Samuel, by David, by Solomon, by Elijah, by Asa and Jehoshaphat, by Joash and the High Priest Jehoiada, by the four first books of the Pentateuch, if not expressly, at least by implication.¹⁰ The "high place," properly so called, though doubtless originally deriving its name from the eminence on which it stood, was a pillar of stone,¹¹ covered, like Mussulman tombs, or like the sacred house of the Kaaba, with rich carpets, robes, and shawls.¹² An altar stood in front, on which, on ordinary occasions, oil, honey, flour, and incense were offered,¹³ and, on solemn occasions, slain animals, as in the Temple.¹⁴ Round about usually stood a sacred

¹ 2 Chr. xxx. 18, 19.

² 1 Kings iii. 2; Ezek. xx. 29.

³ 2 Kings xxiii. 15.

⁴ Amos viii. 14.

⁵ 2 Sam. xxiv. 8.

⁶ Hos. xii. 11; v. 1; vi. 8.

⁷ 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

⁸ 1 Kings xviii. 30.

⁹ Ibid. iii. 4.

¹⁰ Gen. xii. 7, 8; xxi. 13; xxii. 2,

4; xxxi. 54; Judg. vi. 25; xiii. 16;

1 Sam. vii. 10; ix. 12-19; 2 Sam. xv. 32.

¹¹ Deut. vii. 5 (Heb.); xii. 3; xvi. 22 (Heb.); Num. xxxiii. 52; 2 Kings xxiii. 15.

¹² Ezek. xvi. 16.

¹³ Ibid. xvi. 18.

¹⁴ 1 Kings iii. 4.

hedge or grove of trees.¹ Such a grove, as we have seen, was allowed to stand even within the Temple precincts. There was a charm in the leafy shade² of the oak, the poplar, and the terebinth, peculiarly attractive³ to the Israelite and Phœnician devotion. With these was joined, within the walls of Jerusalem itself, the time-honored worship of the Brazen Serpent. It had been brought from Gibeon with the tabernacle, and before it, from early times, incense was offered up, as it would seem, by the northern⁴ as well as the southern kingdom.

Innocent as these vestiges of ancient religion might seem to be, they were yet, like the Golden Calves in the northern kingdom, and on exactly similar grounds, inconsistent with the strict unity and purity of the Mosaic worship, and had an equal tendency to blend with the dark polytheism of the neighboring nations. It was reserved for Hezekiah to make the first onslaught upon them. He was, so to speak, the first Reformer; the first of the Jewish Church to protest against institutions which had outlived their usefulness, and which the nation had outgrown. The uprooting of those delightful shades, the levelling of those consecrated altars, the destruction of that mysterious figure "which Moses had made in the wilderness," must have been a severe shock to the religious feelings of the nation. There was a wide-spread belief, which penetrated even to the adjacent countries, that the worship of Jehovah Himself had been abandoned, and that His support could no more

¹ 2 Kings xxiii. 15; Judg. vi. 26. ² 1 Kings xiv. 23; 2 Kings xvi. 4; See Ewald, iii. 380; Justin, *Apol.* Isa. lvii. 5.

c. 9. ³ Hos. iv. 13; Isa. i. 29; Jer. xvii. 2.

² This is the force of the word translated "grove." See Deut. xii. ⁴ 2 Kings xviii. 4, — "The children of Israel burnt incense to it."

be expected.¹ The Sacred Serpent, the symbol of the Divine Presence, had been treated contemptuously as a mere serpent, a mere piece of brass,² and nothing more. The altars where Patriarchs and Kings had worshipped without rebuke had been overthrown, and the devotion of the nation restrained to a single spot. Was it possible that the faith of the people could survive, when its most cherished relics were so rudely handled, when so little was left to sustain it for the future? So has the popular conservative instinct of every age been terrified at every reformation, and maintained, with the alarmists of the time of Hezekiah, that, as one destructive step leads to another, we must have all or nothing. Hezekiah has been often quoted, and quoted justly, as an example that reform is not revolution, that Religion does not lose but gain by parting with needless incumbrances, however hallowed by long traditions or venerable associations.

But whatever murmurs there may have been, they were checked by the approach of a great calamity, the deliverance from which was the best proof that God had not deserted His people, because He was worshipped with more truth and more simplicity.

The rise of the Assyrian power has been already described. A new king was on the throne of Nineveh, whose name is the first that can be ^{Sennacherib.} clearly identified in the Hebrew, Assyrian, and Grecian annals, — Sennacherib (Sin-akki-irib). His grandeur is attested not merely by the details of the cuneiform inscriptions, but by the splendor of the palace, which, with its magnificent entrances and chambers, occupies a quarter of Nineveh,³ and by the allusions to his con-

¹ 2 Kings xviii. 22 ; 2 Chr. xxxii. 12.

² *Nachash* = serpent; *Nechusht* = brass or brazen.

³ Koyunjik. See a summary of his life as derived from the inscriptions, in Layard, *Nineveh and Baby-*

quests in all the fragments of ancient history that contain any memorial of those times. With a pride of style, peculiar to himself, he claims the titles of "the great, the powerful King, the King of the Assyrians, of the nations, of the four regions, the diligent ruler, the favorite of the great gods, the observer of sworn faith, the guardian of law, the establisher of monuments, the noble hero, the strong warrior, the first of kings, the punisher of unbelievers, the destroyer of wicked men."¹

Such was the King who for many years filled the horizon of the Jewish world. He entered from the north. His chariots were seen winding through the difficult passes of Lebanon. He climbed to the lofty "heights," to the highest caravanserai² of those venerable mountains. He passed along the banks of the streams which he drained by his armies, or over which he threw bridges for them to cross.³ It was his boast that he had penetrated even to the very sanctuary of Lebanon, where, on its extreme border, was the mysterious "park" or "garden" of the sacred cedars. He was renowned far and wide as their great destroyer.⁴ Inscriptions in his Assyrian palace record with pride that the wood with which it was adorned came from Lebanon. He was himself regarded as the Cedar⁵ of cedars. They shrieked aloud — so it seemed to the ear of the wakeful Prophets of the time — as they felt the fire at their roots, and saw the fall of their comrades. They raised a shout of joy when the

lon, 138–147; and in Rawlinson's *Ancient Monarchies*, ii. 428–466. (meaning "to stay the night"), Isa. x. 29.

¹ Rawlinson, ii. 456.

³ Isa. xxxvii. 24, 25 (LXX.).

² "The lodge of its end," 2 Kings xix. 23. Compare the same word

⁴ Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 118.

⁵ Isa. x. 33, 34.

tidings reached them that he was fallen.¹ He descended by the romantic gorge of the river of the Wolf.² His figure is still to be seen there carved on the rock, side by side with the memorials of the two greatest empires of the world before and after him,—the Egyptian Rameses who had preceded him by a thousand years, and the Emperor Antoninus who by a thousand years succeeded him. From Arvad or Sidon he must have embarked for Cilicia, with a view to occupy the Phœnician island of Cyprus; and there took place the first encounter between the Greeks and the Asiatics. There, also, Tarsus is said to have been founded, and, by a curious association, the city of the Apostle of the Gentiles derived its origin³ from the sagacious selection of the Assyrian conqueror.

The main object of Sennacherib was not Palestine, but Egypt, the only rival worthy of his arms. To have dried⁴ up the canals of the Nile was the climax of his ambition. It was as the outposts of Egypt that the fortresses of southern Palestine stood in the way of his great designs. Already Sargon,⁵ his predecessor, had sent his general⁶ against the strong Philistine city of Ashdod, then governed by an independent King.⁷ There was an army of Ethiopian and Egyptian auxiliaries to defend it. But the city was taken, its defenders were carried off, stripped of their clothing and barefoot,⁸ and their King fled to Egypt. Sennacherib now followed his father's example. His immediate

¹ Zech. xi. 1, 2.

² See *Sinai and Palestine*, chap. xii.

³ Strabo, xiv. 4, 8; Arrian, ii. 5.

⁴ 2 Kings xix. 24 (Heb.). It is on this chiefly that Ewald (iii. 631, note) bases the supposition that Sen-

nacherib was now on his return from Egypt.

⁵ Founder of Khorsabad, which bore his name.

⁶ Isaiah xx. 1. *Tartan* = general.

⁷ Rawlinson, *Five Mon.* ii. 412, 431.

⁸ Isa. xx. 4.

object was Lachish,¹ as Sargon's had been Ashdod. But it would have been useless to occupy any Philistine city, whilst the strong fortress of Jerusalem remained in the rear.

It is this which brings him and his army within the view of the Sacred History. All intervening obstacles, north, and east, and west, had been swept away. Monarchies had perished, of ancient renown, but whose names alone have survived this devastation; the king of Hamath and the king of Arphad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena,² and Ivah. Calno had become³ as Carchemish, and Hamath as Arphad; there was not one of them left to tell their story. Damascus⁴ was a heap of ruins. The fortress⁵ of Ephraim had ceased. Tyre had been attacked,⁶ and greatly weakened. The desolations of Moab had roused once more the Prophetic dirge. The wild Arabs of Dumah asked fearfully of the night of the future. The caravans of the Dedanites fled from the sword and bow of the conqueror. The glory of Kedar⁷ failed before him. Even in western nations Senacherib was known as King⁸ of the Arabs. Philistia, which had for a moment rejoiced in her rival's danger, shrieked⁹ in terror as she saw the column of smoke advancing from the north, and sought for help from her ancient foe.

¹ Lachish was evidently at this time one of the strongest fortresses of Judah. There Amaziah had taken refuge (2 Kings xiv. 19). It had been fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chr. xi. 9). Nebuchadnezzar attacked it (Jer. xxxiv. 7).

² 2 Kings xviii. 34. Except Hamath and Carchemish all these towns

are uncertain; most of them seem to have been on the Euphrates.

³ Isa. x. 9.

⁴ Ibid. xvii. 1; x. 9.

⁵ Ibid. x. 9.

⁶ Ibid. xxi. 11.

⁷ Ibid. 13-16.

⁸ Herod. ii. 141. See Ewald, *Proph.* i. 235.

⁹ Isa. xiv. 31 (Heb.).

Each stage of the march¹ of the army into Judea was foreseen. He was first expected at Aiath. There was the renowned defile of Michmash, — the Rubicon, as it seemed, of the sacred territory, — the precipitous pass, on the edge of which he would pause for a moment with his vast array of military baggage. They would pass over, and spend their first night at Geba. The next morning would dawn upon a terror-stricken neighborhood. Each one of those Benjamite fortresses, on the top of its crested hill, or down in its deep ravine, seems ready to leave its rooted base and fly away, — Ramah, Gibeah, Michmash, Geba, — and the cries of Gallim and Laish are reverberated by Anathoth, the village of echoes. It is a short march to Jerusalem, and the evening will find him at Nob, the old sanctuary on the northern corner of Olivet, within sight of the Holy City. “He shall shake his hand “against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill “of Jerusalem.”

It was as if the great rivers of Mesopotamia — the sealike rivers, as they seemed to the Israelites — had burst their bonds, and were sweeping away nation after nation, in their irresistible advance. From a distance the sound of their approach had been as the roaring of wild beasts, as the roaring of the sea.² “The multitudes of many people, a rushing of nations, “like the rushing of mighty waters.”³ And now these waves upon waves had passed over into Judah, and overflowed “and gone over,” and seemed to “have “filled the sacred land,”⁴ to be dashing against the very

¹ Isa. x. 28–32. That this march of Sennacherib was not actual, but (as Dr. Pusey well remarks on MICAH, p. 293) “ideal,” appears from

the account of his approach by Lachish.

² Isa. v. 30.

³ Ibid. xvii. 12.

⁴ Ibid. viii. 7, 8.

rock of Zion itself. Out of those mighty waters the little kingdom alone stood uncovered. Nothing else was in sight. The fenced cities of Judah were taken — Zion alone remained. The desolation was as if the country had been held up like a bowl, and its inhabitants shaken out of it. It was even regarded as the first act of the captivity of Judah.¹

Up to this point Hezekiah had been firm in main-
Submission
of Heze-
kiah.
taining the independence of his country.² But now even he gave way. The show of resistance which he had assumed on the death of Sargon he could sustain no longer. He paid the tribute required. The gold with which he had covered the cedar gates and the brazen pillars of the Temple, he stripped off to propitiate the invader. Peace was concluded. Both at Nineveh and Jerusalem we are able to read the effects. At Nineveh, if we may trust the inscriptions, Sennacherib spoke as follows :³ — “ And “ because Hezekiah, King of Judah, would not submit “ to my yoke, I came up against him, and by force of “ arms, and by the might of my power, I took forty- “ six of his strong fenced cities, and of smaller towns “ which were scattered about, I took and plundered a “ countless number. And from those places I captured “ and carried off as spoil 200,150 people, old and “ young, male and female together, with horses and “ mares, asses and camels, oxen and sheep, a countless “ multitude. And Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jeru- “ salem, his capital city, like a bird in a cage, building “ towers round the city to hem him in, and raising

¹ Isa. xxiv. 1-12. Demetrius, in King of Ekron, delivered to him by Clemens Alex. *Strom.* i. 403. Rawlinson's *Ancient Monarchies*, ii. 435. the rebels of that city. Rawlinson's *Anc. Mon.* ii. 432.

² According to the Assyrian inscriptions he had taken charge of the ³ From Rawlinson, ii. 435.

“banks of earth against the gates to prevent his
 “escape. . . . Then upon this Hezekiah there fell the
 “fear of the power of my arms, and he sent out to
 “me the chiefs and the elders of Jerusalem, with
 “thirty talents¹ of gold, and eight hundred talents of
 “silver, and divers treasures, and rich and immense
 “booty. . . . All these things were brought to me at
 “Nineveh, the seat of my government, Hezekiah hav-
 “ing sent them by way of tribute, and as a token of
 “his submission to my power.”

In Jerusalem there was a strange reaction of policy. The invading army passed in long defile under the walls of the city. It was composed chiefly of two auxiliary forces—one, the Syrians of Damascus, distinguished as of old by their shields;² the other—a name here first mentioned in the Sacred History—Elam or Persia, with the archers for which it was famous throughout the ancient world.³ The chariots and horses, in which both Syria and Assyria excelled, filled the ravines underneath the walls. The horsemen rode up to the gates. Their scarlet dresses and scarlet shields⁴ blazed in the sun. The veil of the city was, as it were, torn away. The glorious front of Solomon's cedar palace and the rents in the walls of Zion were seen by the foreigners.⁵

But, instead of regarding this as a day of humiliation, “a day of trouble and treading down and perplexity,”⁶ the whole city was astir with joy at this

¹ The sum of gold mentioned, 30 talents, is the same in 2 Kings xviii. 14; the sum of silver, 800 talents, is in Kings, 300.

² Isa. xxii. 6; compare Amos i. 5; ix. 7.

³ Comp. Isa. xiii. 17, 18; Jer. xlix. 35.

⁴ Isa. ix. 5 (Ewald, *Propheten*, 226); Nahum ii. 3, and so in the sculptures.

⁵ Isa. xxii. 8, 9.

⁶ Ibid. xxii. 5.

deliverance through their unworthy submission. The people crowded to the flat tops of the houses, in idle curiosity, to see the troops pass by ;¹ instead of “weeping and mourning, and cutting off the hair and sackcloth,” there was joy and gladness, slaying of oxen and killing of sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine. Whatever evil might be in store, they were satisfied to live for the day. “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.”² Isaiah was there, and looked on with unutterable grief. “Look away from me, I will weep bitterly. Labor not to comfort me.” In the midst of the revelry, an awful voice sounded in his ears, “that this was an iniquity which could never be forgiven on this side the grave.”³

Amongst the advisers of the King in this act of submission, there was one who attained a fatal eminence. It was Shebna, the chief minister,⁴ who was over the household, and bore the key of state. His chariots were of royal state. The tomb which he had prepared for himself in the rocky sides of Jerusalem was conspicuous in height and depth.⁵ On him the Prophet poured forth a malediction which, for its personal severity, stands alone in his writings ; the only expression in his writings that in any way recalls the fierce imprecations of the Psalter. He was to be driven from his station, and pulled down from his state.⁶ “Behold the Lord shall sling and sling, and pack and pack, and toss and toss thee away like a ball, into a distant land, and there shalt thou die.”⁷

How far this took effect ultimately we know not.

¹ Isa. xxii. 1, 2.

² Ibid. xxii. 13.

³ Ibid. xxii. 4, 14.

⁴ See Sir E. Strachey's *Hebrew*

Politics, ch. xvi., and F. Newman's *Hebrew Monarchy*, p. 296.

⁵ Isa. xxii. 16, 18.

⁶ Ibid. xxii. 19.

⁷ Ibid. xxii. 17, 18 (Heb.).

But its partial results are soon visible. Shebna's next appearance is in the inferior office of secretary, and in his place we find Eliakim. He was to assume the insignia of the key of state, the mantle, and the girdle. He was now advanced in years, and thus his family were numerous enough to add to his power, as well as to share in it. He was to be like a huge nail or house-peg driven into the palace, of which he was the chief minister, and all his sons and grandsons, great and small, like cups, of all shapes and sizes, were to hang and cluster round him.¹

Whether from the fall of Shebna, or the warnings of Isaiah, as soon as the immediate danger was removed, Hezekiah took courage, and again raised the standard of independence. An embassy had arrived from the powerful Egyptian king, Tirhakah, in his distant land of Ethiopia, with promises of assistance.² The Philistines who occupied the frontier between Judah and Egypt, had been subdued by Hezekiah, apparently with a view to this very alliance.³ On the hope of gaining the chariots⁴ and horses, which constituted the main forces of Egypt, the King and the people buoyed themselves up. All across the perilous desert gifts were sent on troops of asses and camels to propitiate⁵ the great ally.

But it was an alliance fraught with danger to the Jewish commonwealth. The policy of the Egyptian Kings would have been to use the warlike little state as an outpost to sustain the first shock of the enemy

¹ Isa. xxii. 24. Comp. Lecture p. 61, xv. p. 687. Kenrick's *Egypt*, XXXV. 371.

² Isa. xviii. 1, 2; 2 Kings xix. 9. ³ 2 Kings xviii. 8.

His name appears in Manetho, on ⁴ Isa. xxxi. 1.

the Monuments, and in Strabo, x. ⁵ Ibid. xxx. 6.

before he entered the Delta. Their "strength¹ was to "sit still" and sacrifice their weaker neighbor. The tall reed of the Nile-bulrush would only pierce the hand of him that leaned upon it.² Isaiah began the course of protests against the alliance, which was taken up by all the subsequent Prophets.³ Hezekiah responded to the call. By a sustained effort — which gave him a peculiar renown⁴ as a second Founder or Restorer of the city of David — he stopped the two springs of Siloam, and diverted the waters of the Kedron, which, unlike its present dry state, and unusually even for that time, had been flooding⁵ its banks; and in this way the besiegers, as he hoped, would be cut off from all water on the barren hills around. He also fortified the walls, and rebuilt the towers, which had probably not been repaired on the north side, since the assault of Joash king of Israel,⁶ and completed the armory and outworks of the castle or fortress of Millo.⁷ He assembled the people in the great square or open place before the city gate, and there, with his officers, nobles, and guards,⁸ addressed the people, in a spirit which, combined with his active preparations, reminds us of the like combination in the well-known speech of Cromwell. "And the people rested on the words of Hezekiah, King of Judah." Well might any nation repose on one to whom even now the world may turn as a signal example of what is meant by Faith, as distinct from Fanaticism.

The intelligence of these preparations reached Senna-

¹ Such is the real meaning of Isa. xxx. 7.

² 2 Kings xviii. 21; Isa. xxxvi. 6.

³ Isa. xviii., xix., xx. 4-6; xxx. 1-7; xxxi. 1-3.

⁴ Eccus. xlvi. 17.

⁵ 2 Chr. xxxii. 4 (Heb.); see Isa. viii. 6; Ps. xlv. 4.

⁶ 2 Chr. xxxii. 5; comp. 2 Kings xiv. 13.

⁷ 2 Chr. xxxii. 5.

⁸ Ibid. xxxii. 3, 6.

cherib as he was encamped before Lachish, seated in state, as we see him in the monuments, on his sculptured throne, his bow and arrows in his hand, his chariots and horses of regal pomp behind him; the prisoners bending before him, half-clothed and barefoot, from the captured city.¹ From this proud position he sent a large detachment to Jerusalem, headed by the Tartan, or "General" of the host.² They took up their position on the north of the city, on a spot long afterwards known as "the camp of the Assyrians."³ The General, accompanied by two high personages, known like himself through their official titles, "the Head of the Cupbearers" and "Head of the Eunuchs,"⁴ approached the walls, and came to the same spot where, many years before, Isaiah had met Ahaz.⁵ Hezekiah feared to appear.⁶ In his place came Eliakim, now chief minister, Shebna now in the office of secretary, and Joah the royal historian. The Chief Cupbearer was the spokesman. He spoke in Hebrew. The Jewish chiefs entreated him to speak in his own Aramaic. But his purpose was directly to address the spectators, as they sate on the houses along the city wall, and his speech breathes the spirit which pervades all the representations of Assyrian power. That grave majestic physiognomy, that secure reliance on the protecting genius under whose wings the King stands on his throne or in his chariot, finds its exact counterpart in the lofty irony, the inflexible sternness, the calm appeal to a superhuman wisdom and grandeur, the confidence, as in a Divine mission to sweep away the religions of all the surrounding countries, which we

¹ As in Isa. xx. 4. See Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, 149-152.

² 2 Kings xviii. 17.

³ Joseph. *B. J.* v. 7, § 3; 12, § 2.

⁴ *Rab-Shakeh* and *Rab-Saris*.

⁵ 2 Kings xviii. 17; compare Isa. vii. 3.

⁶ Joseph. *Ant.* x. 1, § 2.

read in the defiance both of the Rab-Shakeh and of the great King himself.¹

The defiance was received by the people in dead silence. The three ministers tore their garments in horror, and appeared in that state before the King. He, too, gave way to the same uncontrolled burst of grief. He and they both dressed themselves in sack-cloth, and the King took refuge in the Temple. The ministers went to seek comfort from Isaiah. The insulting embassy returned to Sennacherib. The army was moved from Lachish and lay in front of the fortress of Libnah. A letter couched in terms like those already used by his envoys, was sent direct from the King of Assyria to the King of Judah. What would be their fate if they were taken, they might know from the fate of Lachish, which we still see on the sculptured monuments, where the inhabitants are lying before the King, stripped in order to be flayed alive.² Hezekiah took the letter, and penetrating, as it would seem, into the most Holy Place, laid it before the Divine Presence enthroned above the cherubs, and called upon Him whose name it insulted, to look down and see with His own eyes the outrage that was offered to Him. From that dark recess no direct answer was vouchsafed. The answer came through the mouth of Isaiah. From the first moment that Sennacherib's army had appeared, he had held the same language of unbroken hope and confidence, clothed in every variety of imagery. At one time it was, as we have seen, the rock of Zion amidst the raging flood. At another, it was the lion of Judah, roaring fiercely for his prey, undismayed by the multitude of rustic shep-

¹ 2 Kings xviii. 18-35; Isa. x. 8-11.

² Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, 150.

herds gathered round to frighten him.¹ At another, it is the everlasting wings of the Divine protection, like those of a parent bird brooding over her young against the great Birdsnester of the world, whose hand is in every nest, gathering every egg that is left, till no pinion should be left to flutter, no beak left to chirp.² Or, again, it is the mighty cedar of Lebanon, with its canopy of feathering branches, which yet shall be hewn down with a crash that shall make the nations shake at the sound of his fall; whilst the tender branch and green shoot shall spring up out of the dry and withered stump of the tree of Jesse,³ which shall take root downward and bear fruit upward. Or, again, it is the contest between the Virgin Queen, the impregnable⁴ daughter of Zion, sitting on her mountain fastness, shaking her head in noble scorn, and the savage monster, the winged bull, which had come up against her, led captive, with a ring in his nostrils, and a bridle in his lips, to turn him back by the way by which he came.⁵ At times he speaks plainly and without a figure. "Where is the scribe, where the "receivers, where is he that counted the towers?" "Behold in the morning he is, and in the evening he "is not." "He shall not come into this city, nor shoot "an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor "cast up a bank against it."⁶

It was a day of awful suspense. In proportion to the strength of Isaiah's confidence and of Heze-
 kiah's devotion, would have been the ruin of the

Fall of
Sennache-
rib.

¹ Isa. xxxi. 4.

² Ibid. xxxi. 5; x. 14.

³ Ibid. x. 33, 34 (comp. Ezek. xxxi. 3-6); xi. 1; xiv. 8.

⁴ See the quotations by Gesenius on Isa. xxiii. 12, to show that the

expression "virgin fortress" was used then as with us.

⁵ Isa. xxxvii. 29. As the captives on the walls of Khorsabad (Thenius).

⁶ Ibid. xxxiii. 18; xvii. 14; xxxvii. 33.

Jewish Church and faith, if they had been disappointed of their hope. It was a day of suspense also for the two great armies which were drawing near to their encounter on the confines of Palestine. Like Anianus in the siege of Orleans,¹ Hezekiah must have looked southward and westward with ever keener and keener eagerness. For already there was a rumor that Tirhakah the King of Egypt was on his way to the rescue. Already Sennacherib had heard the rumor, and it was this which precipitated his endeavor to intimidate Jerusalem into submission.

The evening closed in on what seemed to be the devoted city. The morning dawned, and with the morning came the tidings from the camp at Libnah, that they were delivered. “Una nox interfuit inter “maximum exercitum et nullum.” “It came to pass “[that night²] that the Angel of JEHOVAH went forth, “and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred “and fourscore and five thousand.”

By whatever mode accomplished³—whether by plague or tempest; or on whatever scene, whether, as seems implied by the Jewish account, at Lachish, or, by

¹ Gibbon, chap. 34.

² 2 Kings xix. 35. These words are not in Isa. xxxvii. 36. But the fact that it was in a single night is confirmed by Ps. xli. 5 (Heb.); Isa. xvii. 14.

³ By what special means this great destruction was effected, with how large or how small a remnant Sennacherib returned, is not told. It might be a pestilential blast (Isa. xxxvii. 7; Joseph. *Ant.* x. 1, § 5), according to the analogy by which a pestilence is usually described in Scripture under the image of a de-

stroying angel (Ps. lxxviii. 49; 2 Sam. xxiv. 16); and the numbers are not greater than are recorded as perishing within very short periods—150,000 Carthaginians in Sicily, 500,000 in seven months at Cairo (Gesenius, *ad loc.*). It might be accompanied by a storm. So Vitringa understood it, and this would best suit the words in Isa. xxx. 29. Such is the Talmudic tradition, according to which the stones were still to be seen in the Pass of Bethhoron, up which Sennacherib was supposed to be advancing with his army.

the Egyptian account, at Pelusium¹ — the deliverance itself was complete and final. The Assyrian King at once returned, and, according to the Jewish tradition, wreaked his vengeance on the Israelite exiles whom he found in Mesopotamia.² He was the last of the great Assyrian conquerors. No Assyrian host again ever crossed the Jordan. Within a few years from that time, as we have seen, the Assyrian power suddenly vanished from the earth.

The effect of the event must have been immense, in proportion to the strain of expectation and apprehension that had preceded it. Isaiah had staked upon his prophetic word the existence of his country, his own and his people's faith in God. So literally had that word been fulfilled that he was himself, in after-times, regarded as the instrument³ of the deliverance. There is no direct expression of his triumph at the moment, but it is possible that we have his hymn⁴ of thanksgiving when he afterwards heard of the world-renowned murder which struck down the mighty King⁵ in the temple at Nineveh.⁶ The earth again breathes freely. The sacred cedar-grove feels itself once more secure. The world of shades, the sepulchre of kings, prepares to receive its new inmate.

Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become as one of us?
How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!

¹ Herod. ii. 141.

² Tobit i. 18.

³ Ecclus. xlviii. 20, "delivered them by the ministry of Esay."

⁴ The argument in Strachey's *Hebrew Politics*, 149, seems to be very strong, for supposing that by the "king" in Isa. xiv. 4 is meant the King of Assyria.

⁵ See Vance Smith, *Assyrian Prophecies*, 212; Gesenius on Isa. xxxix. 1.

⁶ The god Nisroch, to whom the temple is dedicated, is unknown to the Assyrian inscriptions, and is in the Greek MSS. variously reported as Asarac, Mesoroc, or Nasarac. Rawlinson, ii. 265.

How art thou cut down to the earth, that didst weaken the nations !
Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake
kingdoms ?

That made the earth as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof ?
All the kings of the nations, all of them rest in glory, each one in his
house ;

But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch.¹

If there is any doubt as to the Prophet's utterance, there is none as to the burst of national thanksgiving as incorporated in the Book of Psalms,² when, at the close of that night, "God's help appeared as the morning broke."³ The rock of Zion⁴ had remained immovable, deriving only life and freshness from the deluge of the mighty river which had swept the surrounding kingdoms into the sea. The Prophetic pledge of the name of Immanuel⁵ was redeemed. Again and again the Psalmist repeats, "God is our refuge;" "God is in the midst of her;" "the Lord of hosts is with us;" "the God of Jacob, the God of Jacob, is our refuge." "In Salem is His leafy covert, and His rocky den in Zion."⁶ The weapons of the great army, such as we see them in the Assyrian monuments—the mighty bow and its lightning arrows, the serried shields⁷—were shattered to pieces. The long array of dead horses,⁸ the chariots now useless left to be burnt,⁹ the trophies carried off from the dead, all rise to view in the recollection of that night. The proud have slept

¹ Isa. xiv. (Ewald and LXX.).

² Ps. xlv., lxxvi., perhaps also xlvi. and lxxv.

³ Ibid. xlv. 5 (Heb. and Perowne). Compare Isa. xvii. 14; xxxvii. 36.

⁴ Ps. xlv. 3, 4, 6; Isa. viii. 7.

⁵ "The river" = Euphrates.

⁶ Isa. vii. 14.

⁷ Ps. xlv. 1, 5, 7, 11; lxxvi. 1, 2.

⁷ Isa. xxxvii. 33; Ps. lxxvi. 3, (Heb.); xlv. 9; Herod. ii. 141; Layard's *Nineveh*, ii. 340-342.

⁸ Ps. lxxvi. 6; Isa. xxxvii. 36. The word used always includes animals.

⁹ Ps. xlv. 9. Compare Isa. ix. 5 (Lowth).

their sleep, and the mighty soldiers¹ fling out their hands in vain. The arms have fallen from their grasp. The neigh of the charger, the rattle of the chariot, are alike hushed in the sleep of death. The wild uproar is over, the whole world is silent,² and in that awful stillness the Israelites descend from the heights of Jerusalem,³ like their ancestors to the shores of the Red Sea, to see the desolation that had been wrought on the earth. As then, they carried away the spoils as trophies. The towers of Jerusalem were brilliant with the shields⁴ of the dead. The fame of the fall of Sennacherib's host struck the surrounding nations with terror far and wide. It was like the knell of the great potentates of the world; and in their fall the God of Israel seemed to rise to a higher and yet higher exaltation.⁵

The importance of the deliverance was not confined to the country or the times of Hezekiah. From the surrounding tribes tribute poured in as to an awful Avenger.⁶ One such monument long remained in Egypt. Tirhakah, with his advancing army from the south, no less than Hezekiah on the watch-towers of Jerusalem, heard the tidings with joy; and, three centuries afterwards, the Psalmist's exulting cry, that an Invisible power had "broken the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle" was repeated in other language, but with the same meaning, by Egyptian priests, who told to Grecian travellers how Sennacherib's army had been attacked by mice, which devoured the quivers, the arrows, the bows, the handles of the shields. And a statue of the Egyptian king Sethos⁷ was pointed

¹ Ps. lxxvi. 5; xlv. 10.

² Ibid. lxxvi. 8; xlv. 10.

³ Ibid. xlv. 8; lxxvi. 4, 5.

⁴ Ibid. lxxvi. 4 (Heb.).

⁵ Ibid. lxxvi. 10, 11; xlv. 10.

⁶ Ps. lxxvi. 11; 2 Chr. xxiii. 32.

⁷ Sethos was the King of Lower (as Tirhakah of Upper) Egypt. See Kenrick's *Egypt*, ii. 394.

out in the temple of Phthah at Memphis, holding in his hand the mouse, with the inscription, "Look at me, and "be religious."¹

That general reflection of the pious Egyptian is common both to him and to Hezekiah. But in connection with the Jewish history, the fall of Sennacherib has at once a more special and a more extensive significance. It is the confirmation of Isaiah's doctrine of the remnant, the pledge of success to the few against the many. "Be strong and courageous; be not afraid or dismayed "of the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that "is with him: for there be more with us than with him: "with him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord "God, to help us and to fight our battles." Nor have its echoes ever ceased. The Maccabees² were sustained by the recollection of it in their struggle against Antiochus. It is not without reason that in the churches of Moscow the exultation over the fall of Sennacherib is still read on the anniversary of the retreat of the French from Russia; or that Arnold, in his *Lectures on Modern History*, in the impressive passage³ in which he dwells on that great catastrophe, declared that for "the "memorable night of frost in which 20,000 horses "perished, and the strength of the French army was "utterly broken," he "knew of no language so well "fitted to describe it as the words in which Isaiah described the advance and destruction of the host of "Sennacherib." The grandeur of the deliverance has passed into the likeness of all sudden national escapes.

¹ Herod. ii. 141. The explanation of the mouse as the symbol of invisible destruction (in Horapollo, xlvii.) was first observed by Dean Milman in England, and Eichhorn in Germany.

² 1 Macc. vii. 41.

³ *Lectures on Modern History*, 177; and compare Coleridge on Isa. xlvii. 7-13, in *Statesman's Manual*.

The opening watchword of the Judean psalm of triumph, "God is our refuge and strength," has furnished the inscriptions over the greatest of Eastern churches,¹ and the foundation of the most stirring national hymn of Western Europe.² One of the least religious of English poets, by the mere force of kindred genius, has so entirely, though unconsciously, absorbed into his "Hebrew Melody" the minutest allusions of the contemporary Prophets and Psalmists, as to make it a fit conclusion for the whole event:—

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming³ in purple and gold;
Like the leaves⁴ of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen.

Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay wither'd and strewn.
For the Angel of Death⁵ spread his wings on the blast,⁶
And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd:

And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew still!⁷
And there lay the steed⁸ with his nostril all wide,
Though through it there roll'd not the breath of his pride.

And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances⁹ unlifted, the trumpet unblown.
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted¹⁰ like snow in the glance of the Lord!

¹ The cathedral of St. Sophia at Constantinople, and the earliest cathedral of the Russian Empire at Kieff. with an admirable translation, in Carlyle's *Essays*, ii. 397.

³ Ezek. xxiii. 12, 14.

⁴ Isa. x. 34.

² Luther's psalm, composed first for his own support, — sung since in all the critical periods of the German nation, — "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott" (Wackernagel's *Geschichte der Kirchenlieder*, No. 210). It is given, ⁵ 2 Chr. xxxii. 21; Isa. xxxvii. 36.

⁶ Isa. xxxvii. 7.

⁷ Ps. lxxvi. 5, 8.

⁸ Ibid. lxxvi. 6.

⁹ Ibid. xlv. 9.

¹⁰ Ibid. xlv. 6.

Beneath the excitement of the public crisis, there was within the palace a cause for anxiety hardly less. During Sennacherib's invasion, or immediately after his retreat,¹ Hezekiah, as if worn out by the agitation of the time, was struck down with illness. According to the Jewish tradition before mentioned, it was the first intimation that he was mortal. He was the fourth of his house that was seized with what seemed to be a fatal disease. But what in Asa, Jehoram, and Uzziah had been regarded as deserved visitations, in Hezekiah was regarded as a national calamity. There is no sickness in the Jewish annals so pathetically recorded. With that plaintive tenderness of character, which he seems to have inherited from his great ancestor, he could not bear to part with life. He turned his face away from the light of day to the blank wall of his chamber. He spoke of his upright deeds. He broke into a passionate burst of tears. He had no children to leave behind him.² The darkness of the grave was before him, with nothing to cheer him. Just as he had gained "rest"³ from his troubles, the gates of the sepulchral chamber seemed to open before him. The dark and "silent world" was close at hand,⁴ in which he would no longer see the Divine Presence, in which the voice of praise could no longer be heard. His tent was struck, his thread of life was severed.⁵ From morning till night, and from night till morning, he wasted away. The cry of a dying lion, the plaintive murmur of a

¹ If this view is taken, 2 Kings xx. 6 must be considered as referring to a fear lest Sennacherib should return, and "the rest" in Isa. xxxviii. 10 alludes, in that case, to the retreat.

² Joseph. *Ant.* x. 2, § 1.

³ Isa. xxxviii. 10 (Heb.), 17.

⁴ Ibid. xxxviii. 11, 18.

⁵ Ibid. xxxviii. 12, 13, 14.

wounded dove, were the only sounds that could be heard from the sick-chamber. By his side stood the faithful Isaiah. There seemed no hope of recovery. The Prophetic message which he had to deliver was, "Thou shalt die,¹ and not live." But the words had hardly left his lips than, like the stern prediction of Micah at the beginning of Hezekiah's reign, they were withdrawn. Before he had passed the precincts of the palace, a brighter vision was revealed to him. He returned. He applied the usual Eastern remedy of a cluster of figs² on the tumor which threatened the King's life. Instant relief ensued. The King's spirit revived. He asked, like his father Ahaz, for a sign to confirm the hope that he might once again pass up the steps in his royal procession to the Temple. The sign was given. Unlike many of the wonders of the Jewish history, which are told by writers long after the event, this is related, as it would seem, by an eye-witness, at least by a contemporary. But, like the sign granted to his father, it is for us wrapt in obscurity. What were the "steps" of Ahaz,³ how the movement of the shadow upon them could be said to confirm the rising hopes of the King, we have no means of ascertaining. Of all the possible natural causes, by which such a phenomenon might have been produced, the only one which can be supposed even remotely to illustrate it is the fact that a partial eclipse of the sun took place at Jerusalem,⁴ as far as can be known, in the year of Hezekiah's illness.

¹ Isa. xxxviii. 1.

² This is to this day one of the simple methods of curing a boil or ache, in Turkey and Persia (Morie).
³ 2 Kings xx. 9 (LXX.).

⁴ On Sept. 26, B. C. 713. See the calculations in Thenius on 2 Kings xx. 9-11. The change of the shadow, however, would be, I am told, almost imperceptible, except to a scientific

The King recovered at once. In three days he was able to appear in the Temple, and the almost funereal dirge of his sick-chamber was then blended with the praise of triumphant thanksgiving with which he returns to the living world¹ of joyous human voices and sounding music, rejoicing in the Living Source of all life, and looking forward to handing on the truth to children yet unborn.

It was not long after this recovery that there arrived at Jerusalem an embassy from the Babylonian great city of Babylon, here first distinctly mentioned in the historical narrative. The King was Merodach-Baladan,² the rival or rebel King against the Assyrians. Many motives may have conspired to draw the strangers to Palestine. It may have been to contract³ an alliance with the now powerful Hezekiah against the declining Empire of Assyria. It may have been, as the general tenor of the narrative indicates, to observe the internal resources of the country. It was, as we are expressly told, to join in the general homage of the surrounding nations, awestruck by the destruction of the Assyrian army; and also, with the peculiar curiosity of Chaldæan sages, whilst they congratulated Hezekiah on his recovery, to inquire into the astronomical⁴ wonders with which it was connected. He, in return with that high religious elation which, according to Jewish tradition, mingled with his gentle and devout character, showed them exultingly over his splendid stores. The rumor

observer. The variations of the text in 2 Kings xx. and Isa. xxxviii., and the general import of the whole transaction, are well given in Strachey's *Hebrew Politics*, 289.

¹ Isa. xxxviii. 16, 18, 19, 20.

² Described in Berosus. See Rawlinson, ii. 417-438.

³ Joseph. *Ant.* x. 2, § 2.

⁴ 2 Chr. xxxii. 31.

of their visit spread through Jerusalem. It was almost the first time that the name of the imperial Eastern city had been heard in Jerusalem. Once, by Micah,¹ a joyful visit, rather than a painful exile, to Babylon had been pronounced. Now the name suggests a darker prospect. Isaiah, when he heard from the King whence those strangers had come, drew aside the veil from the event, never named before, but henceforth never absent from the visions of the Jewish Prophets, — the Babylonian Captivity. Those treasures which had been so carefully accumulated — those sons of the royal house, whom Hezekiah had so anxiously desired, would become the prey of the new power, just beginning to appear above the horizon, and soon to fill it from end to end.²

The hopes of Hezekiah, as we have seen, were entirely confined within the limits of this life. None of the Jewish Kings had a keener sense of the grandeur of his mission; but to none was it so closely identified with the interests of the present. The fifteen years of the remainder of his life seemed to be so much rescued from the desolation of impending calamities. When his end at last came, his funeral was marked with unusual honor.

Death of
Hezekiah.
B. C. 697.

The whole population of the city and of the royal tribe of Judah were present. His burial forms a marked epoch in the royal interments. It may be that David's catacomb was filled. Hezekiah is the first king who was buried outside the city of David.³ Apparently his tomb was on the road approaching to

¹ Micah iv. 10.

Prophecy, Isa. xl.—lxvi. But see Lecture XL.

² Isa. xxxix. 2–7. This, if any, period in the actual life of Isaiah must be the occasion of the great

³ 2 Chr. xxxii. 33 (Heb.), and also 2 Kings xx. 21 (Thenius).

the ancient burial-place of his family, and from this time no prince of the royal house was interred within the walls.

If we may trust the dates which bring the death of Sennacherib and of Sethos within the same period, additional point would be given to the peaceful strains in which the aged Isaiah, seemingly at this same time, rose above the contentions and troubles of his earlier days, and instead of denouncing Egyptian alliances and Assyrian invasions, looked forward to the happy union of the three nations which had been so hopelessly entangled in strife and jealousy, — “when Israel shall be third in the midst of the land with Egypt and with Assyria. . . . Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria, the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.”¹ And to this responds the 87th Psalm, probably of the same epoch. “Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Rahab² and Babylon I claim amongst those who know me. Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia were born there.” There is no distinction drawn. These foreign races are reckoned as parts of the Chosen People. Their claim on the Divine Providence is acknowledged. Henceforth the true citizenship of Jerusalem is no longer confined to the earthly city of Palestine.

¹ Isa. xix. 23–25 (Ewald).

² Rahab = Egypt, Ps. lxxxvii. 4

LECTURE XXXIX.

MANASSEH AND JOSIAH.

THE Paganism which had infected the Jewish nation from its earliest times, and which from Solomon's reign had been constantly struggling for the ascendant, made one last violent effort, after the removal of Hezekiah, similar to that which took place in the Roman Empire under the Emperor Julian. Whether or not there be any ground for fancying that Hezekiah had long deferred his marriage, from a belief in his own immortality, it did in fact not take place, so far as we can see, till after the recovery from his illness. His wife was a native¹ of Jerusalem, traditionally the daughter of Isaiah, and bore a name of good omen, — "the Delightful," — Hephzibah. The brilliant crowns, the joyous festivity of the marriage,² were long remembered. The young Prince — perhaps in allusion to the zeal with which that northern tribe had joined in Hezekiah's reforms or to the desire which prevailed in Hezekiah's reign for a union of the two kingdoms — was called by the unusual name of Manasseh.³ On his father's death he was but a boy of twelve years old. It would seem that the Jewish aristocracy, always inclining to the worship and belief of the sur-

¹ Josephus, *Ant.* x. 3, § 1.

³ See Gesenius; also Professor

² Isa. lxi. 10; lxii. 3, 4, 5. (See Plumptre in *Dictionary of the Bible*, Blunt, *Undes. Coincidences*, Part on MANASSEH. 3, v.)

Manasseh.
B. C.
697-642.

rounding nations,¹ took possession of the young Prince, and not only turned his mind to the ancient Polytheism, but also excited him to an almost fanatical hatred against the True Religion, possibly exasperated by the hollowness of the ceremonial system, as Julian was by the Christian controversies. All the strange rites of the surrounding nations were practised with an ardor before unknown.² The King seems to have formed with Egypt a connection closer than any since the time of Solomon. His son was called "Amon," the only name of an Egyptian divinity that we find in the Jewish annals. He plunged into all the mysteries of sorcery, auguries, and necromancy. The sacred furnace of Tophet was built up on an enlarged scale.³ He himself undertook the sacrifice of his own children.⁴ The worship of the heavenly bodies, begun by Ahaz, was restored and eagerly followed everywhere.⁵ In the gardens and on the flat roofs of the houses were built brick altars,⁶ from which little clouds of incense were perpetually ascending. The name of Molech became a common oath.⁷ There was a succession of small furnaces⁸ in the streets, for which the children gathered wood, and in which their parents baked cakes as offerings to Astarte. Even the practice of human sacrifice⁹ became general.

So bold an intrusion of Paganism could not but involve a displacement of the True Worship. Before this time the two forms of worship, when they had existed in the kingdom of Judah, had

Return of
Paganism.

¹ 2 Chr. xxiv. 17, 18; Jer. viii. 1, 2.

² 2 Chr. xxxiii. 6; 2 Kings xxi. 6.

³ Jer. vii. 31; xix. 5, 6; xxxii. 35.

⁴ 2 Chr. xxxiii. 6.

⁵ Jer. viii. 2; xix. 13.

⁶ Zeph. i. 5; Jer. xix. 13; Isa. lxxv. 3.

⁷ Zeph. i. 5.

⁸ Jer. vii. 17, 18.

⁹ Ibid. xxxii. 35; Ezek. xxiii. 37

flourished side by side. Even Athaliah had not ventured to supersede the Temple-ritual. Not only were the high places in the country restored,¹ but two altars were set up in the two courts of the Temple² to the heavenly bodies. In the same sacred precincts was a statue of Astarte.³ Close by were houses of those who lent themselves to the abominable rites with which that divinity was worshipped, and of the women who wove hangings for the sanctuary.⁴ Vessels too were consecrated in the Temple to the use of Baal.⁵ Manasseh was amongst the Kings of Judah what Ahab had been amongst the Kings of Israel,⁶ the first persecutor. The altar in front of the Temple was desecrated.⁷ The ark itself was removed out of the Holy of Holies.⁸ The name of Jehovah is said to have been erased from all public documents and inscriptions.⁹ The nation at large was thoroughly cowed by this fanatical outburst. Only here and there, in this struggle for life and death, faithful voices were lifted up. One, whose name has been almost obliterated, — Hozai,¹⁰ who survived Manasseh's reign and recorded its chief events, — probably launched the terrible invectives which denounced on Jerusalem the doom of Samaria.¹¹ A reign of terror commenced against all who ventured to resist the reaction. Day by day a fresh batch¹² of the Prophetic order were ordered to execution. It seemed as if a devouring lion¹³ were let loose against them. From end to end¹⁴ of Jerusalem were to be seen the

1 2 Kings xxi. 3.

2 Ibid. xxi. 5 ; xxiii. 12.

3 Ibid. xxi. 7 ; xxiii. 6.

4 Ibid. xxiii. 6, 7.

5 Ibid. xxiii. 4.

6 Ibid. xxi. 3, 13.

7 2 Chr. xxxiii. 16.

8 Ibid. xxxv. 3 ; Jer. iii. 16 (?).

9 Rabbinical tradition, quoted by Patrick, *ad loc.*

10 Translated "the Seers," 2 Chr. xxxiii. 18, 19.

11 2 Kings xxi. 10-15.

12 Josephus, *Ant.* x. 3, § 1.

13 Jer. ii. 30.

14 2 Kings xxi. 16.

traces of their blood. The nobles who took their part were thrown headlong from the rocky cliffs of Jerusalem.¹ It was in this general massacre that, according to a Jewish tradition, of which, however, there is no trace either in the sacred books or in Josephus, the great Prophet of the time, Isaiah, now nearly ninety years old, was cruelly slaughtered. The story, as given in the Talmud,² brings out an aspect of Isaiah's mission not altogether alien to the authentic representations of it. It is the never-ending conflict between the letter and the spirit. The King, as if entrenching himself behind the bulwark of the law, charges the Prophet with heresy. Moses had said, "No man shall see God's face and live." Isaiah had said, "I saw the Lord."³ Moses had said, "The Lord is near." Isaiah had said, "Seek the Lord till ye find him."⁴ Moses had said, "The number of thy days will I perfect." Isaiah had said, "I will add to thy days fifteen years."⁵ With a true sense of the hopelessness of a controversy between two wholly uncongenial souls, the Prophet is represented as returning no answer except by the name of God. The hollow cedar-tree or carob-tree, to which he escaped for refuge, closed upon him. They pursued him, and sawed the tree asunder with a wooden saw, till they came to his mouth. Then the blood flowed, and he died.

With this tradition⁶ the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews closes the roll of the martyrs of faith in the Jewish history. It was long received in the earlier Christian Churches. "The mulberry-tree of Isaiah" still marks the alleged spot of the martyrdom in the

¹ Ps. cxli. 7 (see Ewald).

² *Gemara* on *Jebamoth*, iv., quoted in Gesenius, *Jesaia*, i. 11, 12.

³ Isa. vi. 1.

⁴ Isa. lv. 6.

⁵ *Ibid.* xxxviii. 5.

⁶ Heb. xi. 37.

Kedron valley. The day is observed in the Greek calendar on the 6th of July. In an Apocryphal book¹ of the first century, called the Ascension of Isaiah, the legend grows to vaster dimensions. Isaiah is there represented as foretelling to Hezekiah that Belial will reign in the person of his son, and then restraining Hezekiah from destroying Manasseh in horror. He, with the other prophets, Habakkuk, Micah, Joel, and his son Shear-Jashub, retired to a mountain near Bethlehem, and are thence brought by the false Samaritan Prophet Belkira, descendant of Micaiah's enemy Zedekiah, on the charge of having called Jerusalem Sodom and Gomorrah. With a blaze of Christian predictions and vision, he ascends to heaven, and his end thus becomes in the kingdom of Judah, what that of Elijah had been in the kingdom of Israel. But, in fact, the contrast of these legends with the silence of all authentic records on the death of the illustrious Prophet, is one of the best rebukes to the natural craving for signs and wonders. We see what the popular sentiment of the Church has required. We see with how stern a simplicity the Sacred history has denied itself.

The variations respecting the fate of Manasseh himself are more complicated. In the Jewish Church his name was stamped with peculiar infamy. If a noble name had to be replaced by an odious one, that of Manasseh was substituted.² His life in the Book of Kings closes without any relieving trait. It was considered as the turning-point of Judah's sins. The doom was then pronounced irreversible by any subsequent reforms.³ He was one of the three Kings who had, according to the Jewish tradition, no part in the life to come,—

¹ See Gesenius, *Jesaia*, i. 46–55.

³ 2 Kings xxiv. 3, 4; Jer. xv. 4.

² Judg. xviii. 30. See Lecture XIII.

Jeroboam, Ahab, Manasseh. Amon, his son, was a counterpart of himself. Both were buried in a sepulchre of their own, outside the city, in the garden of Uzza, called, it may be, from the son of Abinadab, who had perished beneath the walls of Jerusalem, on the first entrance of the ark.¹

But, though not in the regular narrative, there was recorded in the sayings of Hozai,² and there is still preserved in the Chronicles, a gleam of returning hope even for Manasseh. Although the great Assyrian invasions ceased with the fall of Sennacherib, there is an abrupt and solitary statement of an invasion by Esarhaddon his successor, perhaps in connection with the settlement of the Cuthæan colony in Samaria. His officers, either by surprise or treachery, captured the King and his brothers, and carried them off to Babylon, now rapidly rising in importance, though still subject to Assyria,³ and for the first time the residence of an Assyrian King. Out of this brief and imperfect narrative rose afterwards the detailed story of his imprisonment, of his repentance, and of his wonderful escape from prison. A Greek "Prayer of Manasseh" still remains. Although not admitted into the secondary books of the canon by the Church of Rome, it received the sanction of the Apostolical Constitutions, has been adopted by the Lutheran and Anglican Churches in their apocryphal books, and by its bold and frank theology won the notice of Bishop Butler.⁴ However we reconcile these

¹ 2 Kings xxi. 18, 26. See Lecture XXXIII.

² Extraordinary as is the omission of the captivity of Manasseh in 2 Kings xxi. 17, the account of it in 2 Chr. xxxiii. 11-13 is confirmed (1) by the reference to Hozai, 2 Chr.

xxxiii. 18; (2) by the coincidence with the Babylonian residence of Esarhaddon (see Rawlinson's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 114); (3) by the possible allusion to it in 2 Kings xx. 18.

³ 2 Chr. xxxiii. 11.

⁴ *Analogy*, part 2, ch. 5.

traditions with the older narrative, they are valuable as containing the practical expression of the doctrine already prominent, though remarkable from its contrast with the general "hardness" of the Old Dispensation, — that the Divine mercy far exceeds the Divine vengeance; and that even from the darkest reprobation the free-will of man and the grace of God may achieve a deliverance. If Manasseh could be restored there was no one against whom the door of repentance and restitution was finally closed.

As the martyr age of Israel had produced the peculiar teaching of Elijah, so the martyr age of Judah left its traces in the peculiar turn henceforth given to its own Prophetical literature. Now, probably, began the first distinct indications of the belief which grew stronger and stronger till it reached its highest point in Christianity, that the suffering of the righteous is not a mark of God's displeasure; and, almost as a necessary consequence, that there is a better world beyond this scene of darkness and injustice.¹ Nowhere again do we meet the gloomy view of death that we found in the Psalm of Hezekiah. From this time forward the idea of a suffering Messiah was (to say the least) rendered possible. The doctrine that length of days must be regarded as a sign of Divine favor must have received a fatal blow in the experience that the worst of all the Kings of Judah had the longest reign, — of fifty-five years.

All these feelings are summed up in the Prophet Habakkuk. Both by the legend which has attached itself to his name,² and by the in-

Doctrine of
suffering
Messiah.

Habakkuk.

¹ Ewald (iii. 670, 671) gives this date to Ps. cxli., xvi., xc., the Book of Job, and Isa. liii.

² Bel and the Dragon, 33–39.

ternal evidence of his writings, he must have lived under the impressions of the age immediately preceding the dissolution of the kingdom, and if, as is probable, somewhat later than this period, yet deriving his experience from it. He, more than any other of the Prophets, represents the perplexities, not of the nation, but of the individual soul—the peculiar trial which tormented so many exalted spirits at his time. He, more than any other, has furnished to the Christian Apostle the doctrine which forms the key-note of the three Epistles to the Romans.¹ the Galatians, and the Hebrews. From this—its first appearance in the Prophets—may be best learned the original and most comprehensive signification of Justification by Faith. He saw with grief the increasing contrast of sin and prosperity, innocence and suffering. Whoever had seen or heard of the tyranny of Manasseh—the luxury and selfishness of the nobles—the poor neglected—the Prophets persecuted—during these last agonies of the kingdom of Judah, might well be provoked into the sceptical, yet confiding, prayer: “O Lord, how long
 “shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear? and cry unto thee
 “out of violence, and thou wilt not save? Why dost
 “thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold griev-
 “ance? Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil,
 “and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest
 “thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest
 “Thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that
 “is more righteous than he? And makest men as the
 “fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no
 “ruler over them?”²

¹ Hab. ii. 4, quoted in Rom. i. 17; phrase itself see Professor Lightfoot, Gal. iii. 11; Heb. x. 38. For the *On the Galatians*, 149.

² Hab. i. 2, 3, 13, 14.

He retires into himself; he mounts above the world to gain a calmer and loftier view; he stands upon his watch and sits upon his tower.¹ Like Zephaniah the Divine watcher — like Elijah at Horeb — like Elisha on his tower by the Jordan — like Isaiah when he heard the cry, “Watchman, what of the night?” he waits to see what the Divine answer to his doubts would be. At last it comes. It comes after long delay. “The vision “is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall “speak.” It comes wrapt in contradictions — “tarry-“ing, and yet not tarrying.” He was to write the vision plainly on tablets, and not to be disappointed by its delay, or bewildered by its contradictions. “Behold he “whose heart is lifted up within him shall not have his “course smooth before him. But the just shall live by “his faith.”² That brief oracle inspires Habakkuk with new life. He had waited in fear for the Divine message; his lips had quivered at the voice, his bones were consumed, his whole being troubled.³ But as his fear melts into hope, the Prophet seems to be transformed for the moment into the Psalmist; the ancient poetic fervor of Deborah is rekindled within him; the great days of old rise before him;⁴ and in that last lyrical outburst of Hebrew poetry, the wild struggle is at length calmed; a deep peace settles down over the close of the life which had begun in such a tempest of doubt and agitation. “Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, “neither shall fruit be in the vines; although the “labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields yield no “food; although the flocks be cut off from the fold, and “there shall be no herd in the stall;” yet the Divine joy in his breast is inextinguishable. His last strain is

¹ Hab. ii. 1.

² Ibid. ii. 3, 4 (Heb.).

³ Hab. iii. 16.

⁴ Ibid. iii. 2-15.

as of a second David, leaping from crag to crag like the free gazelle,¹ in a strength mightier than his own.

Whatever be the date or precise fulfilment of these hopes of Habakkuk, it is certain that in the accession of the grandson of Manasseh a better day dawned upon the Church of Judah. The popular election² which placed Josiah on the throne, of itself marks some strong change of public feeling. There was also a circle of remarkable persons in or around the Palace and Temple, who, possibly driven together by the recent persecutions, had formed a compact band, which remained unbroken till the fall of the monarchy itself. Amongst these the most conspicuous at this time were Shaphan the secretary, Hilkiah the High Priest, and Huldah the Prophetess, who, with her husband Shallum, himself of the Priestly race, and keeper of the royal wardrobe, lived close by the Temple precincts.³ Within this circle, the King had grown up, with another youth, destined to be yet more conspicuous than the King himself, — the Prophet Jeremiah. It was by the joint action of this group that a discovery was made which, if we could but unravel its whole mystery, would throw more light on the history of sacred literature than any other event under the monarchy, and which, even in the obscure form in which we now discern it, precipitated the great reaction of Josiah, and colored the whole teaching of his age. Eighteen years had passed before the King entered on the work which, from the various influences which it represented, and from its unexpected and welcome appearance, was

¹ Hab. iii. 17–19. Verse 19 is taken from Ps. xviii. 33.

² 2 Kings xxi. 24; 2 Chr. xxxiii. 25.

³ 2 Kings xxii. 14. "In the second fortification of the city," translated

"in the college," see Thenius, *ad loc.*

to make his remembrance "like the composition of the "perfume that is made by the art of the apothecary ; "sweet as honey in all mouths, and as music at a banquet of wine."¹ The Temple during the previous reign had fallen into a state of neglect such that, as in the time of Joash, a complete repair had become necessary. On this occasion, however, the King and the Priesthood acted in entire harmony. Suddenly, Discovery of the Book of the Law. under the accumulated rubbish or ruins of the Temple (as it would seem), the High Priest discovered a roll containing the "Book² of the Law."

Whatever may have been the exact nature of this document, two points, and two alone, are clear. First, it was as complete a surprise as if the Book had never been known before. During the troubles of the reign of Manasseh, there is no proof of its destruction. During the previous reigns, with two or three doubtful exceptions, there is no proof of its existence. David, Solomon, Asa, and Jehoshaphat had lived in constant, and apparently unconscious, violation of the ordinances which came home with such force to Josiah. Whether it were written now or ages before, the revolution in the mind of the discoverers was the same. Like the revival of the Pandects at Amalfi, like the revival of the Hebrew and Greek text of the Bible at the Reformation, the sudden republication of the sacred Book of the Constitution amounted almost to a new revelation.

Secondly, whatever other portions of the Pentateuch may have been included in the roll, there can be little doubt that the remarkable work to which the Greek

¹ Eccclus. xlix. 1.

² The facts stated in the text are such as are admitted by all. The arguments for the book being Deu-

teronomy, are well stated in Dean Milman's *History*, i. 389 ; for its being the whole Pentateuch, in Ewald, iii. 699.

translators gave the name of “the Second Law”¹ (Deuteronomy) occupied the chief place. The duties of the Prophetic order, the duties of the King, the necessity of political and religious unity, the prohibition of high places, the extreme severity against idolatrous practices, the blessings and curses pronounced on obedience and disobedience to the Divine precepts, are all peculiar to

Deuteronomy, and either applied or were directly applicable² to the evils which Josiah was called to reform. There was a still higher purpose which the “Second Law” served, a still nobler spirit in which Moses might be said to have risen again in the days of Josiah, to promulgate afresh the code of Sinai. Now, for the first time, the Love of God, as the chief ground of His dealings with His people — the love towards God as the ground of their service to Him — the spiritual character and free choice of that service³ — were urged on the nation with all the force of Divine and human authority. Fully to bring out this aspect of the Mosaic law was reserved for a greater than Josiah, — that other youth of whom we spoke, his contemporary Jeremiah; and yet more completely for a Greater either than Josiah or Jeremiah, to whom the Book of Deuteronomy was amongst the chief weapons which He deigned⁴ to use from the ancient Scriptures, and who, beyond even Jeremiah, corresponded to the Second Moses, of whom that book spoke.

¹ The argument here remains the same, whether the Book of Deuteronomy, in its present shape, was of a long anterior date (as Dean Milman, 208, 209, 215), or written in the time of Manasseh (as Ewald, iii. 683), or by Jeremiah himself (as Bishop Colenso, *On the Pentateuch*, Part 3, p. vii.).

² Deut. xii. 2; xvi. 21, 22; xvii. 18; xviii. 10; xxiii. 17, 18, &c.

³ Ibid. vi. 4-9; vii. 6-11; x. 12-15; xix. 9; xxx. 6-20.

⁴ Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10; John v. 46 Comp. Deut. viii. 3; vi. 13, 16; xviii 15-22.

But for the moment it was not the Prophet, but the King, who took his stand on the newly discovered law. To him it was communicated by ^{Josiah's reformation.} the Secretary Shaphan. By him it was recited aloud from end to end to an immense concourse assembled in the court of the Temple, in which every order of the State, Priests and Prophets, no less than nobles and peasants, heard the new revelation from the lips of the Royal Reformer, as he stood erect, leaning against the pillar,¹ at the entrance of the inner court, beside the sacred laver, himself the new Lawgiver of his people.

Within the limits prescribed, the Reformation of Josiah now began. It was inaugurated by one of those national vows or covenants which were in the monarchy what the vows of individuals had been in the earlier stages of the nation. This was followed by a Passover, such as even Hezekiah had not been able to celebrate — such as had not been celebrated as far back as the first foundation of the kingdom. The Pagan worship was uprooted with the same punctilious care as that with which, during the Paschal season, the houses of Israelites were to be cleansed from every morsel of leaven.² Every instrument or image, if of wood, was burnt; if of metal or stone, was shattered to pieces and ground to powder. The ashes were carried beyond the territory of Judah, or thrown on the numerous graves along that vast cemetery, the necropolis of the glen of the Kedron. Then fell in rapid succession the houses of those who ministered to the licentious rites close by the Temple, and the sanctuaries that stood just outside the gates of Jerusalem. The wooden chariots conse-

¹ 2 Kings xxiii. 3. So Mahomet at Cordova had his own special pulpit
 leaned first against a palm-tree and in the great mosque.
 then against a pillar; so the Khalif ² 2 Chr. xxxv. 1-19.

crated to the Sun, the brazen altars planted by Ahaz and Manasseh in different parts of the Temple disappeared. Everywhere, as by a kind of exorcism, he desecrated the sanctuaries of the High Places, especially those in the valley of Hinnom and on Mount Olivet, by heaping upon them the bones of the dead.¹ Even beyond the limits of Judah his zeal extended to the old Israelite sanctuaries of Bethel and Samaria. Thither he came as the long-expected deliverer, foretold by Iddo the seer.² A terrible vengeance followed on those who had ministered at these shrines. Those that he still found alive were executed upon their own altars.³ Of those who were dead, the bones were dug up (with the one exception of the Prophet of Bethel, whose memory was still preserved on the spot) and thrown upon the sites of the altars which they had once served.

We cannot doubt that the sanguinary acts of Josiah, no less than of Elijah and of Jehu, are condemned by Him in whom was fulfilled the spirit of the true Deuteronomy, the Revived Law, which the impetuous King carried out only in its external observances, and by its own hard measures. It was the first direct persecution that the kingdom of Judah had witnessed on behalf of the True Religion. Down to this time the mournful distinction had been reserved for the half-pagan King Manasseh. But cruelty had here, as in all like cases, provoked a corresponding cruelty; and the reformation of Josiah, if from his youth and his zeal it has suggested his likeness to our Edward VI., by its harsher features encouraged the rough acts which disfigured so many of the last efforts of that and other like movements of the Christian Church.

¹ 2 Kings xxiii. 4-14.

³ 2 Kings xxiii. 20.

² 1 Kings xiii. 2.

It was also a violation of the sanctity¹ of the sepulchre almost without precedent in the Jewish history. The disinterment of the Kings of Israel by hostile dynasties had occurred in the fury of revolutions, and by characters odious even in their own times for fierceness and violence. But a Jewish Prophet² had already denounced the savage practice in a neighboring kingdom, as “a hatred” (if we may use the words in which a Christian commentator has finely amplified the Prophetic warning) “carried beyond the grave, which the heathen too held to be unnatural in its implacableness and uncharitableness — a hatred which is a sort of impotent grasping at eternal vengeance — hatred which, having no power to work any real vengeance, has no object but to show its hatred.” A condemnation too strong, indeed, for the imperfect and mixed acts of those of old time, like the Kings of Moab and of Judah, but not too strong for the deed as seen in the light of a Christian and civilized age.

But, in spite of all this effort, the kingdom of Judah was doomed. Perhaps the very vehemence of the attempt carried with it its own inefficacy. The Prophets of the time. Even the traditions which invested Josiah with a blaze of preternatural glory, maintained that in his day the sacred oil was forever lost. *Too late* is written on the pages even which describe this momentary revival. It did not reach the deeply seated, wide-spread corruption which tainted rich and poor alike. Large as is the

¹ Josiah's solemn desecration of the graves of Prophets and Priests long ago departed was pleaded by Justinian and Theodora in the synod of Menas, and in the Fifth General Council, as a sanction for anathematizing the dead, who down to that time had been thought by their re-

moval from this world to be protected from any further ecclesiastical censure.

² The crowning crime of the King of Moab was that “he burned the bones of the King of Edom.” Amos ii. 1. See Dr. Pusey's note.

space occupied by it in the historical books, by the contemporary Prophets it is never mentioned at all.

Of these, the most peculiar to this period is Zephaniah, remarkable as belonging to an illustrious Zephaniah. family tracing back its descent for four generations, possibly to the King Hezekiah.¹ He is the first distinct herald of the great catastrophe which, step by step, he saw advancing. He looks out, according to the full meaning of his name, "the Watchman of Jehovah," over the wide and awful prospect, in which nation after nation passes in review before him; not without hope that out of the very absorption of the little kingdom of Judah into the surrounding nations, the element of good which it contains may spread and strengthen itself; that, like the strange companions whom misery makes one, they may all be led to call on the name of Jehovah, and to serve Him with one accord, "shoulder to shoulder."² But still his prevailing and peculiar mission is as the Prophet of the Judgment. From him, the Apocalyptic vision of the New Testament and the sublime Hymn of the Christian Church have borrowed their most striking words and imagery:—

The day of the Lord is at hand;
 The great day of the Lord is near, is near —
 It hasteth greatly,
 The voice of the day of the Lord;
 The day of the Lord's anger,
 The day of the Lord's anger,
 The day of the Lord's anger.
 That day of wrath, that dreadful day;
 A day of trouble and distress,
 A day of wasteness and desolation,
 A day of darkness and gloominess,
 A day of clouds and thick darkness,
 A day of trumpet and alarm

¹ Zeph. i. 1.

² Zeph. iii. 7-9.

Against the fenced cities,
Against the lofty towers.¹

Of this great day, however delayed for a time, two calamities, in the reign of Josiah, were the immediate precursors. The first was the invasion of the Scythians. It was the earliest recorded of those movements of the northern populations, hid behind the long mountain barrier, which, under the name of Himalaya, Caucasus, Taurus, Hæmus, and the Alps, has been reared by nature between the civilized and uncivilized races of the old world. Suddenly, above this boundary, appeared those strange, uncouth, fur-clad forms, hardly to be distinguished from their horses and their wagons, fierce as their own wolves or bears, sweeping towards the southern regions which seemed to them their natural prey. The successive invasions of Parthians, Turks, Mongols in Asia, of Gauls, Goths, Vandals, Huns in Europe, "have," it is well said, "illustrated the law and made us familiar with its operations. But there was a time in history before it had come into force, and when its very existence must have been unsuspected. Even since it began to operate, it has so often undergone prolonged suspension, that the wisest may be excused if they cease to bear it in mind, and are as much startled when a fresh illustration of it occurs, as if the like had never happened before."² No wonder that now, when the veil was the first time rent asunder, all the ancient monarchies of the south — Assyria, Babylon, Media, Egypt, even Greece and Asia Minor — stood aghast at the spectacle of these savage hordes

The Invasion of the Scythians.

B. C.
634-632.

¹ Zeph. i. 7, 14-18; ii. 1, 2. The Vulgate translation of i. 15 has sup-plied the first words of the hymn, *Dies Iræ, Dies illa*.

² Rawlinson's *Anc. Mon.* ii. 508.

rushing down on the seats of luxury and power. It must have been about the middle of Josiah's reign that one division of them broke into Syria. They penetrated, on their way to Egypt, as far as the southern frontier of Palestine, and were then bought off by Psammetichus, and retired, after sacking the temple¹ of Astarte at Ascalon. One permanent trace of their passage they left as they scoured through the plain of Esdraelon. The old Canaanitish city of Bethshan, at the eastern extremity of that plain, from them received the name which it bore throughout the Roman empire in the mouths of the Greeks, *Scythopolis*,² "the city of the Scythians."

The total omission of this formidable apparition in the Books of Kings and Chronicles is a remarkable proof of the attenuation, apparently increasing as it approaches the end, of the historical narrative of this closing period. But from the Prophets we catch glimpses of the inroad of some nomadic horde, which can hardly be explained but by the knowledge acquired from other sources, of these strange intruders. Habakkuk³ perhaps saw them from his watch-tower of speculation, galloping on their horses, terrible as themselves — both terrible as leopards or wolves. Zephaniah saw them, as they prowled round the sanctuary of Ascalon and through the cities of Philistia. "The sea-coast shall be for pastures⁴ and cisterns for shepherds, and folds for flocks." Jeremiah from the first moment of his call had seen in the emblem of a seething caldron in the north the sign of the quarter whence the fiery

¹ Herod. ii. 103–105; Strabo, i. 3, v. 10, § 14. See Rawlinson, ii. 16; Justin, ii. 3. See Ewald, iii. 516.
693.

² Judith iii. 10; 2 Macc. xii. 29. and Scythians were blended together.
Comp. Judg. i. 27 (LXX.); Polyb. ³ Hab. i. 6–10, if the Chaldæans
⁴ Zeph. ii. 4–6.

flood of desolation¹ would issue, and had raised the warning cry to announce the coming of the shepherds from the North to pitch their tents around Jerusalem, — a wild host on horses of war, with bow and spear, and shout like that of a roaring sea. Already long before,² and also long after, there floated on the prophetic horizon the dark cloud beyond the Caucasus, big with the fate of the future destinies of the world. It was a storm always ready to burst, with its discharge of horses and horsemen, of swords and shields, of bows and arrows, of staves and spears, and innumerable bands, horde succeeding horde; a convulsion which should send a universal shudder through all living creatures, and shake down the mountains and lay level alike cliff and fortress; an enemy which could only be repelled by the combined forces of man and nature, — by an overthrow which would pile up the glens of the Dead Sea with mountains of human graves, and would furnish out a sacrificial feast to all the vultures and wild beasts of the mountains of Israel, such as they had never known before, from the carcasses of chiefs and warriors.³ In these tremendous forms, not without a Prophetic sense of their vast importance, was hailed the first apparition of the future fathers of the coming Northern world. Gog and Magog are the primeval names which, now first introduced, were revived in the Apocalypse⁴ as representatives of the vast barbarian tribes which threatened the empire of Rome, as that of Assyria had been

¹ Jer. i. 13–15; vi. 2–5. Ewald supposes that their actual appearance before the walls of Jerusalem is described in Psalm lix., which he ascribes to Josiah.

² Ezek. xxxviii. 17, 20.

³ Ibid. xxxviii. 1–16; xxxix. 1, 9

⁴ Rev. xx. 8.

threatened by the Scythians of old. Here, first in any historic record, is the only indication which the Bible contains of the name of any modern European nation.

Russia. The mighty people of RUSSIA,¹ through this wild invasion, has won a place in the Sacred books. It was reserved for the Christian Apostle, still perhaps deriving his main impression from this their first historical appearance, to open that prospect in which even the savage "Scythian" should claim his place beside the polished "Greek," the Oriental "barbarian," and the inspired "Jew."²

The second calamity of Josiah's reign, though connected with the first, came from a different quarter. Probably strengthened by the influx of the northern nations, the Babylonian power was now rising into an overwhelming predominance, of which the full account belongs to that portion of the Jewish history not included in this volume. On the throne of Egypt was seated a vigorous king, Necho, who wished to anticipate that growth by securing himself on the east and north. Between these two contending powers stood the kingdom of Judah, now enlarged by the accession, at least in name, of the Israelite territory. The tendency to an Egyptian alliance, which had been denounced by Isaiah in the reign of Hezekiah, now seems to have been exchanged for an opposite policy, and as Hezekiah came across the path of Sennacherib by attaching his fortunes to Tirhakah and Sethos, so Josiah came across the path of Necho by attaching himself to the King of Assyria. Either making use of his celebrated fleet, and so landing

¹ *Rosh* (Ezek. xxxviii. 2, 3 ; xxxix. 1), wrongly translated in A. V., "chief prince."

² Col. iii. 11.

at Accho, or following the track of his predecessor Psammetichus, and coming up the plains of Philistia, Necho advanced through Palestine towards the passes of Lebanon, on his way to the great battle-field of Carchemish. In the plain of Esdraelon, the scene of so many combats in the earlier history of Israel, Josiah determined, with a rashness which appeared to be against the counsels of Providence,¹ to stay the progress of the Egyptian army. The encounter took place near Megiddo,² at an ancient sanctuary of the two Syrian gods Hadad³ and Rimmon, on the mercantile route from Damascus to Egypt. No details are given of the battle. Everything is absorbed in the one tragical event which closed it. Josiah was in his chariot, but disguised, according to the practice of the royal families of Israel,⁴ in moments of extreme emergency. The Egyptian archers, such as we see on their monuments, discharged a volley of arrows against him. He fell: he was placed in his second chariot of reserve, and carried to Jerusalem to die, and was buried in his own sepulchre, according to the usage which had prevailed since the time of Hezekiah. So mournful a death had never occurred in the Jewish annals. All the population of the city and the kingdom attended the funeral. There was an elegy over the departed King, probably as pathetic as that which David had sung over Saul and Jonathan. It was by the most plaintive of the Prophets, Jeremiah, who now first appears on the scene of public acts. Long afterwards was that sad day remembered, both as it was celebrated on the field of battle and at Jerusalem. The

¹ 2 Chr. xxxv. 21; 1 Esdras i. 27, ³ Zech. xii. 11.

28.

⁴ 2 Chr. xxxv. 22. Comp. 1 Kings

² Herod. ii. 159; 2 Chr. xxxv. 22. xxii. 30.

lamentation of Jeremiah was preserved in the memory of the male and female minstrels, as a national institution, even till long after the return from the Captivity.¹ Every family shut itself up and mourned apart. In every household the men and women mourned each apart in their own seclusion.² In the prospect of the heaviest calamity that could befall the nation, this was the mourning which recurred to them, mourning as one mourneth for his only son, in bitterness as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.³ The widows were innumerable; the childless mother was left lamenting for her sons slain in battle; she laid herself down to die; the sun of her life went down as it were in mid-day,⁴ as in the total eclipse of that fatal year.

Josiah was the last royal hero of Israel. With his death the history of the Jewish monarchy might end, were it not for one great event and one great person that still remain,—the Fall of Jerusalem and the Prophet Jeremiah.

¹ 2 Chr. xxxv. 25; 1 Esdras i. 32. Jer. xv. 7-9. (See Thenius on 2 Kings xxiii. 30.) The eclipse was on September 30, B. C. 610. (See Grote's *Greece*, iii. 313.)

² Zech. xii. 11-14.

³ Ibid. xii. 10.

⁴ This is the probable allusion of

**JEREMIAH AND THE FALL OF
JERUSALEM.**

LECTURE XL.



SPECIAL AUTHORITIES FOR THIS PERIOD.

I. The Historical and Prophetical Books.

JOSIAH.

Jer. i.—v.; Zephaniah and Habakkuk; 2 Kings xxii.—xxiii. 30; 2 Chr. xxxiv., xxxv.

JEHOAHAZ.

2 Kings xxiii. 30–33 (Jer. xxii. 11); 2 Chr. xxxvi. 1–4.

JEHOIAKIM.

2 Kings xxiii. 34.—xxiv. 5; 2 Chr. xxxvi. 4–8. Jer. xxvi. (with vii.—x.) preaching in the Temple. — xviii., xix., xx., preaching in the Valley of Hinnom and the Temple. — xlvi. 1–12, battle of Carchemish. — xlvii. Return of Necho through Philistia. — xlviii., xlix. Moab and Ammon. — xxv. foreign Nations. — xxxv. the Rechabites. — xxxvi. Baruch's Recitation. — xlv. Baruch's despair.

JEHOIACHIN.

Jer. xxii. the Three Kings. — xxiv. the Captives and the Remnant. — xxix. Letter to the Exiles. — xlix. 34–39, Elam. — li. 59–64, Babylon (perhaps also Jer. l., li. 58). — Baruch i.—v.

ZEDEKIAH.

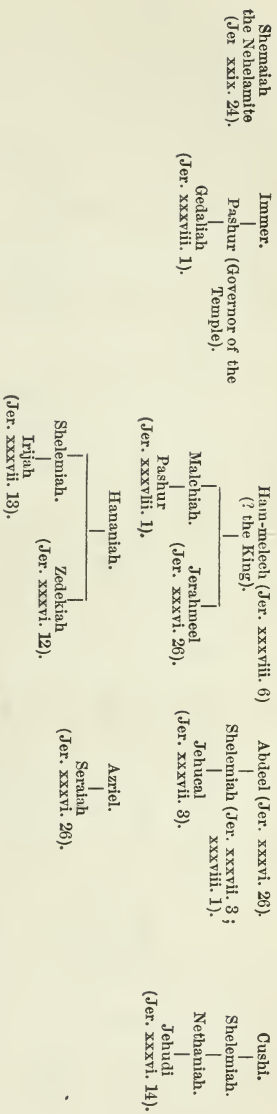
Jer. xxvii., xxviii. Beginning of Revolt. — Zech. xii.—xiii. 6; xiv.; Jer. xxxvii., xxxiv. Raising the Siege. — Jer. xxi., xxxviii., xxxix. 15–18, the Prison. — Ezek. viii.—xxiii.; Jer. xxxii., xxxiii., xxxix. 1–14. — Ezek. xxiv. the Siege. — Jer. xl.—xliv. Escape. — Jer. xlvi. 13–28, Obadiah. — Ezek. xxv.—xxxiii. March on Egypt.

II. Jewish Traditions in Josephus (*Ant.* x. 5–9).

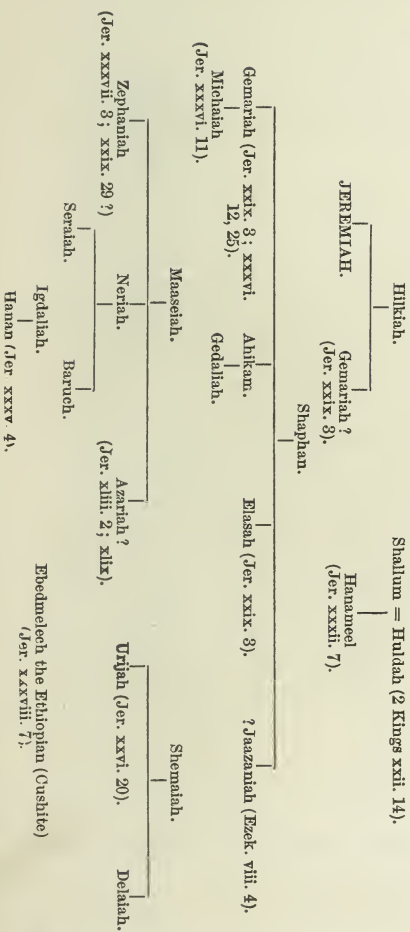
III. Illustrations from the Assyrian and Egyptian inscriptions; collected in Rawlinson's *Bampton Lectures*, Lecture IV., and the notes thereon.

N. B. — For the arrangement of here placed in the order of the events the chapters of Jeremiah, see Ewald to which they refer. and other commentators. They are

III. PARTY OF "PRIESTS" AND "PRINCES."

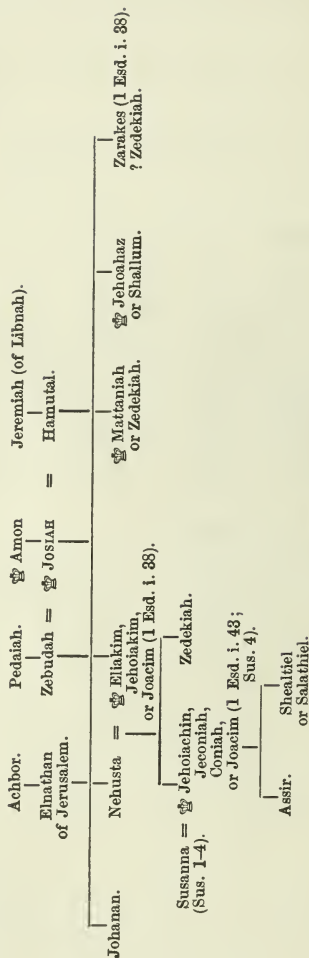


IV. JEREMIAH AND HIS FRIENDS.

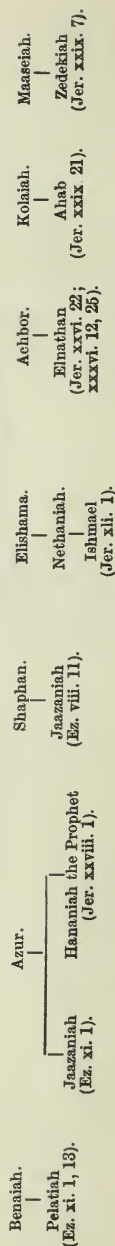


THE PARTIES AT THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.

I. LAST PRINCES OF THE HOUSE OF JUDAH.



II. THE HEATHEN PARTY OF "THE PRINCES."



LECTURE XL.

JEREMIAH AND THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.

WE are now approaching a great catastrophe, which has been twice over enacted in the history of the Jewish people.

Three other like events of parallel magnitude have been witnessed; the fall of Babylon, as the close of the primeval monarchies of the an-^{Fall of} Jerusalem. cient world; the fall of Rome, as the close of the classical world; and, in a fainter degree, the fall of Constantinople, as the close of the first Christianized Empire. But, in the case of Jerusalem, both its first and second destruction have the peculiar interest of involving the dissolution of a religious dispensation, combined with the agony of an expiring nation, such as no other people or city has witnessed, such as no other people has survived, and, by surviving, carried on the living recollection, first of one and then of the other, for centuries after the first shock was over.

Of these two captures of Jerusalem, the second is still far in advance, and it is of the first only that we have here to speak. But it is by bearing both in mind that we can best appreciate the various feelings with which the approach of the first was regarded, and the bewilderment and confusion which, as the current of the history draws nearer and nearer to the fatal whirlpool, beset not merely the events them-

selves, but the textual structure of the various narratives and prophecies which record it.

By one of those lightning flashes, which at times, in the moments of its thickest darkness, reveal the interior of Jewish society, we are admitted, during these closing scenes, to a closer view of its several elements in this its latest crisis, than we have enjoyed since the time of David. The violence which had, in the earlier period of the divided kingdom, characterized the northern dynasty, in the reigns of Manasseh and Josiah penetrated the fortunes of Jerusalem also. It had become a mortal battle between two fierce parties. The persecution of the Prophets by Manasseh had provoked the persecution of the idolatrous Priests by Josiah. The mutual mistrust which had already, in the time of Hezekiah, broken up families and divided the nearest friends, and made a man's worst enemies those of his own household,¹ had now reached the highest degree of intensity: "Every man had to "take heed of his neighbor, and suspect his brother."²

There was the party which may be called the Party of the
Heathen
Princes. party of "the Princes," — that body of nobles who, from the time of Joash, perhaps of Rehoboam, had leaned to the idolatrous and licentious practices of the early Kings of Judah, and who held the later Kings almost as puppets in their hands. With them were associated many of the Elders or chiefs of the tribes, under whose auspices the polytheism, which Josiah had for the moment extirpated, still continued to linger, even in the courts of the Temple itself. At the north gate of the sacred precincts was a statue of Astarte, and a wailing-place,

¹ Micah vii. 5, 6.

² Jer. ix. 4; xii. 6. See Ewald, iii. 711.

where, as at the Phœnician Byblos, there were women howling over the loss of the Syrian god Thammuz.¹ In the subterranean chambers underneath the Temple area were fitted up chapels decorated after the Egyptian fashion, with likenesses of sacred animals, to which incense was offered.² Even in the space of the court between the porch and the altar, there was a band of high dignitaries who turned their backs on the Temple, and paid their devotions eastward to the Sun as he rose over the Mount of Olives.³ The names of some of the more determined of these reactionary Princes are preserved: Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan;⁴ probably, also, Elishama, the chief secretary of the royal family, and his grandson Ishmael—who had a connection with the court of Ammon, and himself belonged to the royal family.

By the side of these, perhaps opposed to them, perhaps allied with them, in that strange combination which often brings together, for Party of the
Priests and
Prophets. purposes of political or religious animosity, parties themselves most alien to each other, was the great body of the Sacerdotal, and even of the Prophetic order. There were those who directly lent themselves to magical rites, both amongst the male and female members⁵ of the Prophetic schools. There were also those who clung with a desperate tenacity to the hope that the local sanctity of Jerusalem was a sufficient safeguard against all calamities; who repeated, with that energy of iteration⁶ which only belongs to Eastern fanatics, the very name of the Temple of Jeho-

¹ Ezek. viii. 3-5, 14.

² Ibid. viii. 8-12.

³ Ibid. viii. 16.

⁴ Ezek. viii. 11; xi. 1.

⁵ Ibid. xiii. 2, 6, 18.

⁶ Jer. vii. 4. See Lecture XXX.

vah as an all-sufficing talisman; who prided themselves on the newly discovered treasure of the Law;¹ who recited the old prophetic phrases,² often careless of what they meant; who saw in the city only a vast caldron³ constructed for their special content and enjoyment. Amongst these were Pashur, of a high Priestly family, holding the office of governor of the Temple, with his son Gedaliah; another Pashur, with his uncle Jerahmeel, high in the favor of the court; the whole family of Shelemiah, including his son Jehucal and his grandson Jehudi; Seraiah the son of Azariah; and Irijah the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah — Hananiah himself being one of the leading Prophets of this extreme party.

In the midst of these adverse influences was a powerful group, the direct inheritors of the traditions of the reign of Josiah. Hilkiyah, Shaphan, Maaseiah, and Huldah, indeed, were passed away; but their friends or children still remained; and the families especially of Shaphan and Maaseiah formed a powerful society, united by the closest sympathy. The life of the whole circle was the Prophet Jeremiah, bound up by various ties of kinship or friendship with almost all of them. Even if his father Hilkiyah was not the High Priest of that name, yet his own Priestly descent must have brought them into close connection. His uncle Shallum was the husband of the Prophetess Huldah, and his friend Hanameel was his cousin, their son. His constant companion was Baruch the grandson of Maaseiah, and his most powerful protectors, Ahikam and Gedaliah, were the son and grandson of Shaphan.

The Friends
of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah.

¹ Jer. viii. 8.

³ Ezek. xi. 3.

² Ibid. xxiii. 31, 33.

Born in the priestly city of Anathoth, with the influence of these families round him, it might well be said that he was consecrated to his office even from his earliest days.¹ His father had received his birth with a joy of which the remembrance was long preserved,² and which strangely contrasted with the dark career of his after life. The faithful adherence of these companions through good report and evil, his constant appeals to them for help, the unexpected aid which, through their intervention, was brought to his rescue, bring out the fascination which he exercised over them, and the tender sympathy which they received from him, so as, more than any other of the ancient Prophets, to recall the great Apostle, who "had a thousand friends, and loved each as if he had a thousand souls, and died a thousand deaths when he parted from them."

But it might be said of Jeremiah, even more than of St. Paul, that in spite of these numerous friends, for the greater part of his mission he ^{His solitude.} "had no man like-minded with him." From the first moment of his call he was alone, amidst a hostile world. The nation was against him. In the day when he uttered his lament over Josiah, he lost his last hope in the house of Judah. From that hour the charm of the royal line of David was broken; the institution which had of itself sustained the monarchy had lost its own vital power. The nobles were exasperated against him by his fearless rebukes of their oppression and luxury. Most of all, he was hated and cursed — the bitterest trial, in every time — by the two sacred orders to which he himself belonged. He was one of those rare instances in the Jewish his-

¹ Jer. i. 5.

² If we may take literally Jer. xx. 15.

tory, in which Priest and Prophet were combined, and by a singularly tragical fate he lived precisely at that age in which both of those great institutions seemed to have reached the utmost point of degradation and corruption; both, after the trials and vicissitudes of centuries, in the last extremity of the nation of which they were the chief supports, broke down and failed. Between the Priesthood and the Prophets there had hitherto been more or less of a conflict; but now that conflict was exchanged for a fatal union — “a wonderful and horrible thing was committed in the land; the Prophets prophesied falsely and the Priests bore rule by their means; and the people loved to have it so,”¹ and he who by each of his callings was naturally led to sympathize with both, was the doomed antagonist of both, — victim of one of the strongest of human passions, the hatred of Priests against a Priest who attacks his own order, the hatred of Prophets against a Prophet who ventures to have a voice and a will of his own. His own village of Anathoth, occupied by members of the sacred tribe, was for him a nest of conspirators² against his life. Of him, first in the sacred history, was the saying literally fulfilled, “a Prophet hath no honor in his own birth-place.”³

And, as often has happened in like case, the misfortune of his position was aggravated by the necessity of opposing the general current of popular prejudice, and professional narrowness, not merely in its grosser forms of selfishness and superstition, but in those points where it merely carried to excess feelings which were in themselves good, and

His doctrines.

¹ Jer. v. 31; ii. 8; vi. 13; xxiii. 11, 34; xxvi. 11.

² Jer. xi. 19, 21.

³ Ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ πατρίδι, Luke iv. 24.

which had in an earlier age been sanctioned by the noblest examples and most fruitful results. In the altered circumstances of his age, he could no longer be what Isaiah had been: nay, that unshaken belief in the inherent invincible strength of Jerusalem which Isaiah had preached, and which the Prophets of his time repeated after Isaiah with a constant and not unnatural confidence, it was the duty of Jeremiah to oppose. Even the yet diviner truth of the possibility of restoration for the most hardened character, which Isaiah had set forth in words whose fire lives to this day, was to Jeremiah overclouded by the sense of the ingrained depravity which seemed to have closed up every entrance to the national conscience. The message, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,"¹ was exchanged for the desponding cry, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?"² The free-will of Isaiah and the fatality of Jeremiah were each true for the moment, each liable to exaggeration by those who will not make allowance for the effects of changed circumstances. There are times when ancient truths become modern falsehoods, when the signs of God's dispensations are made so clear by the course of natural events as to supersede the revelations even of the most sacred past. Jeremiah saw his country, not as he wished and hoped it to be, but as it really was: he was prepared not merely to admit as an inscrutable fate, but to proclaim as his heaven-sent

¹ Isa. i. 18.

² Jer. xiii. 23. Calvin, with that good sense which marks his commentary, rejects the support which the exaggerated use of this verse might

give to his system, and recognizes that it is true of the Jews, not as an eternal law of reprobation, but *longo peccandi usu*.

message, that Jerusalem was doomed. He was to acknowledge that the Temple, with all its hallowed associations, was of no avail; that the newly discovered Law had come too late. In the Reformation of Josiah, which fills so large a space in the historical narrative, he took no part, as though feeling it to be merely a superficial cure that had not probed the deeper moral evil within, which he never ceases to denounce and lay bare. He was to look the shortcomings of his country and his church full in the face, and not shrink from accepting their extremest consequences. When the northern kingdom fell, Hosea's hope could still be sustained by the reflection that Judah was safe. When Amos and Isaiah attacked the Priesthood of Judah, they still felt that there remained the Prophets on whom the nation could fall back. But when Jeremiah mourned for Israel, he felt that there was no reserve in Judah. And when the Priesthood closed in hostile array around him, he felt that, as far as Jerusalem was concerned, the Prophets¹ were no supporters. He was himself the last of those gifted seers, who combined their Prophetic teaching with the active public life of statesmen and counsellors of the nation.

Against this fate, "against the whole land, against the Kings of Judah, against the Princes, against the Priests," against the Prophets, "against the people of the land," he was "to gird up his loins, and arise and speak;"² he was to be the solitary fortress, the column of iron, the wall of brass, fearless, undismayed, unconfounded, — the one grand, immovable figure, which alone redeems the miserable downfall of his country from triviality and shame, — for forty years,

¹ Jer. xxiii. 9-40; v. 31.

² Jer. i. 17, 18; xiii. 13.

day by day, at early morning,¹ standing to deliver his mournful warnings, his searching rebukes, in the royal chamber or in the Temple court. He was the Prophet of unwelcome, unpalatable Truth, from whose clear vision all illusions² had vanished away; in whom the high poetic aspirations of former times were transformed into the hard prose of common life; yet a prose which itself becomes more poetical than poetry, because of its own exceeding tragical simplicity.

But here another element enters into his history, which gives a yet deeper tone to its melancholy interest. For this desperate and solitary career we see no longer the wild romantic energy of an Elijah, nor the royal air and majesty of an Isaiah. Of all the Prophets, Jeremiah is the most retiring, the most plaintive, the most closely compassed with ordinary human weaknesses. The cry which he uttered as the dark truth first broke upon his young mind was characteristic of his whole career: "Ah Lord! I cannot speak; I am but a child."³ It is this childlike tenderness which adds force to the severity of his denunciations, to the bitterness of his grief. His was not one of those stern characters which bear without repining the necessary evils of life. He who was to be hard as brass and strong as iron, who had to look with unmoved countenance on the downward descent of his country, yet longed that his "head were waters, and his eyes a fountain of tears, that he might weep⁴ day and night for "the daughter of his people." He whose task it was

¹ Jer. xxv. 3. Comp. xxxv. 15.

³ Jer. i. 6.

² See Bunsen, *Gott in der Geschichte*, i. 193.

⁴ Ibid. ix. 1. Comp. Umbreit on Jeremiah, p. xi.

to run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, like the Grecian sage,¹ to see if he could find a single honest man, — to live, as it were, in the market-place as a butt of scorn,² alike from the religious and irreligious world, — he was, by his own nature and inclination, the Prophet of the desert, longing for a “lodge³ in “some vast wilderness,” that he might leave his people, and avoid the sight of their crimes. His constant imagery is taken from those lonely regions⁴ where he would fain be — “their bare hills, swept by the “dry wind,⁵ where there was no human being,⁶ nor “bird of the heavens to be seen;” where wolf, and lion, and panther prowled;⁷ where the untamable⁸ wild asses galloped up to the highest peaks, and snuffed up the sultry air; where the heath⁹ grows on the parched places, in a salt land, and not inhabited. He stood apart from the almost invariable usage of the Jewish Priesthood by remaining in a life of celibacy, joining neither in the common assemblages of mourning nor of feasting.¹⁰ The austere habits of the Arabian Rechabites, even in the crowded streets of Jerusalem, attracted his admiration,¹¹ and drew down his emphatic benediction. “It was good for him to bear the yoke

¹ Jer. v. 1, 2.

² Lam. iii. 14, 62, 63.

³ Jer. ix. 2.

⁴ Much of this imagery might be suggested by his journey to Babylon (xiii. 1–8), if the burial of his girdle by the Euphrates is to be construed literally, and if “Euphrates” be the right reading. But both these points are doubtful. The mention of “the cliff” (Jer. xiii. 4) rather leans to some spot in Palestine.

⁵ Jer. iv. 11; xii. 12 (Heb.).

⁶ Ibid. iv. 25.

⁷ Jer. v. 6; xii. 8.

⁸ Ibid. ii. 24; xiv. 6. “It is a characteristic of the wild ass to seek the highest summits of the mountains, and there to stand cutting the blue sky with its head and ears erect. Their extraordinary strength and agility impels them to do such feats. They are swifter of foot and wilder than any beast that ranges the uplands.” (Morier.)

⁹ Jer. xvii. 6; xlviii. 6.

¹⁰ Ibid. xvi. 2, 5, 8.

¹¹ Ibid. xxxiv. 18, 19.

“even from his youth. He sits alone, and keeps silence, “crouching under his burden.”¹ “He was led not into “light, but into darkness,” as in the sepulchral chambers of the dead. His griefs pierced like a flight of arrows² into his soul. Through the chambers of his innermost heart there is a shudder.³ He was overwhelmed with despair at the thought that he, the gentle, the unselfish, should have been a man of war and a man of contention to the whole country;⁴ that he who had never joined the assembly of the mockers, but found his delight in God’s moral law, should be tormented by this perpetual pain, this incurable wound that refuses to be healed.

“The time is out of joint; O cursèd spite,
That ever I was born to set it right.”

Such is the burden of his fainting heart. He doubts as to the truth of God: “O Lord, Thou hast deceived “me, and I was deceived.” “O Lord Jehovah, Thou “hast greatly deceived this people.”⁵ He heaps curses on the day of his birth, curses on the innocent messenger who brought the news of his birth: “Wherefore “came I forth out of the womb to see labor and sorrow, “that my days should be consumed⁶ with shame.” He loses all confidence in himself. He feels that “the way “of man is not in himself; that it is not in man that “walketh to direct his steps.” “O Lord, correct me but “with judgment — not in thine anger, lest Thou bring “me to nothing.”⁷ At times he is stung beyond endurance into imprecations, as fierce and bitter on his country and on his opponents,⁸ as ever came from the

¹ Lam. iii. 27, 28, 2, 6.

² Ibid. iii. 12, 13.

³ Jer. iv. 19 (Ewald).

⁴ Ibid. xv. 10.

⁵ Jer. iv. 10.

⁶ Ibid. xx. 7, 14–18.

⁷ Ibid. x. 23, 24.

⁸ Ibid. xviii. 21; xi. 20–23.

lips of Deborah or David. At times he condescends to the meaner arts of secrecy and falsehood.¹ The shortcomings of the Prophets amongst whom he lived were shared by himself. Not even of Elijah can it be said more truly, that "he was of like passions with ourselves."

It is this deep despondency and misery of Jeremiah that have caused his name to pass into a proverb for unavailing sorrow. But there is a redeeming element in his Prophecies which rescues them from the reproach with which this common phrase would identify them.

His spiritual teaching.

There is a brighter aspect of his mission, which makes itself felt, at times even against his own will, or at least without his own consciousness. He was "set over the nations and the kingdoms," not only "to root out, pull down, destroy and throw down," but also "to build and to plant."² In a higher than in any merely temporal sense, the constructive part of his theology rose immediately from its destructive elements. He was, as we have seen, the last of the Prophet statesmen; he was projected upon the world out of the failure of the Prophetic system. "His heart within him was broken because of the Prophets." "The Lord was against the Prophets."³ But this brought out more forcibly than ever the essence of the Prophetic spirit in the ruin of its external framework. He had no outward signs to which to appeal. Even his style never rises to the finish or the magnificence of Isaiah or of Nahum. But this compels him to appeal almost entirely to the moral and spiritual force of his Prophetic messages, and these Prophetic messages he places on their highest ground. First of the Prophets,

¹ Jer. xxxviii. 25-27.

³ Jer. xxiii. 9, 30.

² Ibid. i. 10.

he proclaims distinctly what had been more or less implied throughout, that predictions were subject to no overruling necessity, but depended entirely on the moral state of those to whom they were addressed; that the most confident assurance of blessing could be frustrated by sin; that the most awful warnings of calamity could be averted by repentance.¹ He showed that the most sacred words of prophecy might, by constant repetition, lose their meaning; that even the very name of "the burden of the Lord," which had summed up the burning thoughts of Amos and Isaiah, was to be discontinued altogether.² He showed to the Priests who trusted in the Temple, that the day was coming when the very fall of the Temple, the very loss of the Ark itself, might be considered a boon. They shall no more say, "the Ark of the covenant of the Lord; neither shall it come to mind; neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more."³ The reformation of Josiah he notices only to speak of the uselessness of the much-vaunted discovery of the sacred books. "How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us? Lo, certainly in vain hath He made it; the fear of the scribes is in vain."⁴ Yet, if we may trust the arguments by which the Book of Deuteronomy has been connected with that revolution, a peculiar interest accrues to the Prophet, who stands to Deuteronomy almost in the same relation as that book stands to the rest of the Pentateuch. Jeremiah is, above everything else, the Prophet of the Deuteronomy—of the "Second Law;" not merely from the close connection of outward style, but because he brings out more clearly than

¹ Jer. xviii. 7, 8.

³ Jer. iii. 16; vii. 4.

² Ibid. xxiii. 36-38.

⁴ Ibid. viii. 8.

any other Prophet the spiritual lessons of that the most spiritual of all the Mosaic books, and looks forward to the time when his people shall be guided by a higher than any merely external law. It is to Jeremiah, even more than to Isaiah, that the writers of the Apostolic age¹ look back, when they wish to describe the Dispensation of the Spirit. His predictions of the Anointed King are fewer and less distinct than those of the preceding Prophets. But he is the Prophet beyond all others of "the New Testament" "the New Covenant," — which first appears in his writings. As in the one glance which he casts forward to the Coming Ruler, it is as the Just King, the personification of Divine Justice,² in contrast to the weak and wayward rule of the unhappy Princes that closed the line of Judah, so amidst the degradation of the Prophetic and Priestly offices, he consoles himself with the thought that, whilst even the Divine covenant of the ancient Law is to be abolished, there is to be a new covenant, a new understanding between God and man; a new Law, more sacred even than Deuteronomy, written not in any outward book, or by any inspiration of words and letters, but in the hearts and spirits of those who will be thus brought into union with God. And the knowledge of this new truth shall no longer be confined to any single order or caste, but "all shall know the Lord from the least unto "the greatest."³ With this conviction, there was no bound to the extent of his hopes. In the letter they have been but scantily and imperfectly realized, but in the spirit they have been fulfilled more widely than even he ventured to predict; for they were founded on

¹ Heb. viii. 8-13; x. 16, 17.

² Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; xxxiii. 15, 16. Jer. xxx. 9; xxxiii. 17.

³ Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.

The other allusions are very slight,

the eternal law of moral progress and spiritual regeneration, more fixed than that "which giveth the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when its waves roar."¹ The eulogy of the Law in the 119th Psalm, in the peculiar rhythm which marks the poetry of this age of the Jewish Church, is but a prolonged expression of Jeremiah's hope, the transfiguration of the ancient Mosaic system in the sunset of the declining monarchy, before the night which will be succeeded by a more glorious dawn. "I see that all things come to an end; but thy commandment is exceeding broad."² This is the reward of the truthfulness of his character. To read in the possibilities of the future a balance for the difficulties of the present, was his compensation for the rare gift of seeing things as they really were, through no false or colored medium. He "stood" firmly "on the old ways;"³ felt their weakness and their strength, saw where they failed and where they were solid, and therefore he was able to look out, and discern "the good way" in which henceforth his church and country could walk.

Such is the outline of the Prophet's mission which we have now to follow through the fall of the Holy City, and onward through the effects of his teaching and his life as long as the last echoes of that fall linger in our ears.

The struggles of the expiring kingdom of Judah are like those of a hunted animal, — now flying, now standing at bay, between two huge beasts of prey, which, whilst their main object is to devour each other, turn

¹ Jer. xxxi. 35. Comp. Isa. xl. 12.

³ Jer. vi. 16. (Bacon's *Essays*,

² Ps. cxix. 96.

xxiv.)

aside from time to time to snatch at the smaller victim that has crossed their midway path. It was not now a question of independence, but of choice between two foreign sovereigns.¹ When the country recovered from the shock of Josiah's death, it found itself in the grasp of the Egyptian Necho. Jerusalem,² if not actually taken by him, was virtually in his hands, though not without a struggle. Shallum, the second son of the dead King, was hastily raised over his elder brother's head to the vacant throne. Like all the Princes of this period of dissolution, he took, perhaps as a kind of charm, a new sacred name on his accession, Jehoahaz.
B. C. 609. Jeho-Ahaz, "the Lord's possession;" and, like all the Kings whose right was disputed, was anointed³ with the sacred oil, as if the founder of a new dynasty. In three months he was carried off to the conqueror's camp in the north at Riblah. Riblah was the regular outpost of those great hosts, whether from Egypt or Babylon,⁴ during the whole of this period. On the banks of a mountain stream, in the midst of a vast and fertile plain, at a central point, where across the desert the roads diverge to the Euphrates, or along the coast, or through the vale of Coelo-Syria to Palestine and the South, no more advantageous place of encampment could be imagined. Thither first, and then to Egypt,⁵ the young usurper was carried off. Something there had been in his character, or in the popular mode of his election, which endeared him to the country. A lamen-

¹ Dean Milman (3d ed.), i. 394.

³ 2 Kings xxiii. 30.

² It seems to me that the arguments for identifying Cadytis (Herod. ii. 159, iii. 5) with Jerusalem prevail. If it be Gaza (as Ewald and Hitzig), then its capture coincides with Jer. xlvii. 1.

⁴ Ibid. xxiii. 33; xxv. 20; and see Robinson, *Bib. Res.* iii. 545.

⁵ 2 Kings xxiii. 34; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 4.

tation, as for his father, went up from the Princes and Prophets of the land for the lion's cub,¹ that was learning to catch his prey, caught in the pitfall, and led off in chains — by a destiny even sadder than death in battle. “Weep not for the dead, nor bemoan him, but “weep sore for him that goeth away.” He was the first King of Judah that died in exile. “He shall re-
 “turn no more, he shall return no more to see his native
 “country — his native land² no more.” His Jehoiakim.
B. C.
609-599. elder brother, Eliakim, taking the more sacred name of Jeho-Jakim,³ was placed on the throne as a vassal by the Egyptian King, and Palestine became a mere province of Egypt. For a few years a temporary splendor remained, combined with the restoration of old heathen rites. The King himself, by enforced labor, enlarged his palace, roofed it with cedar, painted it with vermilion, as if the evil day was still far off, and he could rest securely under the protection of the Egyptian power, whose heavy tribute he exacted from his unwilling subjects.⁵ He remained fixed in the recollections of his countrymen, as the last example of those cruel, selfish, luxurious Princes, the natural product of Oriental monarchies, the disgrace of the monarchy of David.

In this last decline of the state there were Prophets to bear witness to higher truths. It may be that the warning voice from Habakkuk's watch-tower was raised against the grinding oppression with which Jehoiakim's buildings were carried on, which would make the very stones and rafters cry out against him.⁶ Another

¹ Ezek. xix. 3, 4.

² Jer. xxii. 10, 11, 12.

³ 2 Kings xxiii. 34. Apparently, by a kind of incantation, to secure

the blessing promised in 2 Sam. vii. 12-16 (Keil).

⁴ Jer. xxii. 13, 14.

⁵ 2 Kings xxiii. 35.

⁶ Hab. ii. 9-11.

Prophet, Urijah, from the ancient Kirjath-jearim, at the very beginning of the reign, by his energetic remonstrances,¹ probably against the Egyptian alliance, provoked such a fierce reaction of king, and nobles, and army, that he had to fly for safety even into Egypt itself. He was pursued by no less a person than the King's father-in-law, and brought back to Jerusalem, where he was beheaded, and his corpse excluded from the cemetery, which, as it seems, by long usage, had been devoted to the Prophetic order.²

But the chief monitor was Jeremiah himself. Except at the funeral of Josiah, this is the first record of his public appearance. In the court of the Temple, in the midst of a vast assemblage, headed by the Priestly and Prophetic orders, the Prophet rose up and delivered an appeal³ which contained almost every element of his teaching. It struck the successive chords of invective, irony, bitter grief, and passionate lamentation. It touched on all the topics on which his countrymen would be most sensitive — not only the idolatrous charms by which they hoped to win the favor of the Phœnician deities, in whom they perhaps but only half believed, but on the uselessness and impending fall of the ancient institutions, which had seemed to contain a promise of eternal duration, — the Temple of Solomon, the Mosaic ritual, the Royal Sepulchres, the Holy City, the Chosen People, the sacred rite of Circumcision. But the main point of his address was when he reminded them of the last signal overthrow of the national sanctuary, and bade them see with their own eyes, not

¹ By a very ingenious argument with the unknown author of Zech. Bunsen (*Gott in der Geschichte*, p. xii.—xiv. 452) endeavors to identify Urijah

² Jer. xxvi. 20–23.

³ Ibid. vii.—ix.

thirty miles from Jerusalem, the desolate state of Shiloh.¹ It was as if the picture of the ruined shrine of Eli and Samuel was too much to be borne by the Priests and the Prophets,² who surrounded the Temple court. They closed upon him, as in like manner upon Paul on the same spot six hundred years after. As then, so now, the deliverance of the Prophet from the fury of the religious world came from the calmer and juster view of the secular power. The Princes or nobles, who in these latter reigns had almost turned the monarchy into an oligarchy, were assembled in the King's palace, when they were summoned by the tumult in the Temple to the judgment-seat, within a gate newly erected, perhaps in Josiah's repairs, and called, in the fervor of his zeal, "The Gate of Jehovah."³ There the Prophet pleaded for his life, and the nobles, reckless and worldly as they were, with a deeper sense of justice than his fanatical assailants, solemnly acquitted him. Some of them appealed to the forbearance of Hezekiah towards Micah; and Ahikam, the son of Josiah's minister, stood gallantly between the Prophet and his enemies.⁴

Meantime the doom which Jeremiah had foretold was rapidly approaching. Had the worn-out empire of Assyria been the only antagonist of Jehoiakim's Egyptian patron, we might have had a long line of successors, under whom the peculiarities of the Jewish faith and nationality would have been gradually absorbed into the kingdom of the Pharaohs. But a new power was at hand, of which the full influence on the Chosen People

¹ Jer. vii. 12-14; comp. xxvi. 6.

³ Jer. xxvi. 10 (Heb.).

² Ibid. xxvi. 8, 11. The LXX.

⁴ Ibid. xxvi. 24.

has "*false* Prophets." But this is not expressed in the original.

was reserved for the later period of their history; but which even now, in its first beginnings, changed the relations of all the Asiatic kingdoms. The Assyrian Empire vanishes from the earth so suddenly and so noiselessly, that its fall is only known to us through the reduced grandeur of the palaces of its latest King, and through the cry of exultation raised over its destruction by the Israelite Prophet.¹ Whatever may have been the other causes of its overthrow, — Scythian hordes or Median kings,² — there can be no question that in its place arose, in the plenitude of its greatness, the Babylonian Empire, under the guidance, first of Nabopolassar, known to us only through the fragments of heathen annalists, and of his greater son, Nebuchadnezzar, who for the next thirty years occupies in the horizon of Asia and Egypt the position of Sennacherib, and, yet earlier, of Rameses II. It seemed to those who witnessed it like the rising of a mighty eagle, spreading out his vast wings, feathering with the innumerable colors of the variegated masses which composed the Chaldaean host, sweeping over the different countries, and striking fear in his rapid flight.³ The main object is Egypt, and the unhappy Jewish nation which, in defiance of old Prophetic warnings, past and present, has allowed Egypt to make it her instrument. “Pharaoh, King of Egypt, is but a noise: he hath passed ‘the time appointed.’”⁴

It was at Carchemish, an ancient fortress commanding the passage of the Euphrates, that the collision took place. The Egyptian army had come

Battle of
Carche-
mish.

¹ Nahum. See Lecture XXXIV.

³ Ezek. xvii. 3, &c.; comp. Jer.

² For the whole of this convulsion

xlvi. 40; xlix. 22.

see Rawlinson's *Ancient Monarchies*, chap. ix., and Ewald, iii. 726, &c.

⁴ Jer. xlv. 17.

against it, with all its glittering array of buckler and shield,¹ helmets, spears, and coats of mail, of chariots and horses, from all its subject nations, like the rising flood of its own Nile,² and thence was driven back upon itself by the Babylonian host. To the extremities of Egypt, from the cities of the Delta, as far as Thebes, the shock was felt.³ With the retreat of Necho, the whole country was left open to the invading army. The snorting of the Chaldæan horses was heard from the northern frontier⁴ at Dan. The whole land trembled at the sound of their neighing. Like a whirlwind, like a torrent, they swept on.⁵ The terrified inhabitants retired into the fortified towns.⁶ Within the walls of Jerusalem was seen the unwonted sight of Bedouin⁷ Rechabites still preserving their Arab customs, unchanged, in the midst of the capital. The short-sighted rulers⁸ had looked for peace, but no good came, — for a time of health, and, behold, trouble.

Once more Jeremiah became the centre of interest. What course would he, the Prophet of the age, take in the face of this impending calamity? Policy of Jeremiah. To all, except those who took the wildest and deepest view of the prospects of the world and of the Church, the stern policy of determined resistance had everything to recommend it. But it was that wider view which presented the whole subject to the Prophet's eye in a different aspect. He foresaw, on the one hand, that the immediate pressure of Babylon was irresistible; but, on the other hand, that it could not last. If Jerusalem could but weather the present storm,⁹ he was

¹ Jer. xlvi. 2, 3, 4, 9.

² Ibid. xlvi. 7, 8.

³ Ibid. xlvi. 14, 25; Ezek. xxx. 4-19; 2 Kings xxiv. 7.

⁴ Jer. viii. 16.

⁵ Jer. xxv. 32; xlvii. 2.

⁶ Ibid. viii. 14.

⁷ Ibid. xxxv. 6-11.

⁸ Ibid. xiii. 15.

⁹ See Josephus, *Ant.* x. 7, § 4.

assured that it would soon pass by; and that then, whatever blessings were bound up in the preservation of the House of David and of the Holy City would remain intact. His political position has been compared to that of Phocion¹ in the presence of the Macedonian power, and to that of the Achæans² in the presence of the Roman power. It may still more fitly be compared to that of the Jewish Christians in the time of the Christian era, when the desperate resistance of the Zealots to the armies of Vespasian and Titus hurried on the ruin of the Jewish state, in spite of the warnings of the prudent Josephus, and of One far other than Josephus, who, like Jeremiah, stood aloof from all the wild intrigues and conspiracies that would have made Him the chief of a nation of insurgents. It may be compared again to that of the leaders of the Christian Church, in the dissolution of the Roman empire,—Augustine, who replied to the taunts of treason brought against the Christians by foreshadowing the rise of the City of God out of the ruins of Rome,—Salvian who, by his earnest vindication of the moral government of God, not less than by his wailings over the calamities of the time, has deserved the name of the Jeremiah of his age.³ It was not indifference to his country, but attachment to its permanent interests, with the yet larger consequences wrapt up in them, which induced him to counsel submission. It was his sense of the inestimable importance of that sacred spot, with its sacred institutions, which caused him to advise every sacrifice for the sake of retaining it. He had the courage, so rare in religious or political leaders, to surrender a part for the

¹ Bunsen, *Gott in der Geschichte*, 144.

³ "Novus ille hujus sæculi Hieremias" (Baronius, 476, 3).

² Niebuhr, *Lectures on Ancient History*, iv. 303.

sake of preserving the whole, — to embrace in his view the complete relations of the great scheme of the world, rather than fix his attention exclusively on the one pressing question of the moment. As there are times when the constitution must be broken to save the commonwealth, — when the interests of particular nations or doctrines must give way to the preponderating claims of mankind or of truth at large, — so Jeremiah staked the eternal value of the truths which Jerusalem represented against the temporary evils of the Chaldaean dominion. It was a bitter pang, but the result seemed to him worth the cost.

To steel his melting heart
 To act the martyr's sternest part ;
 To watch with firm unshrinking eye
 His darling visions as they die,
 Too happy if, that dreadful day,
 His life be giv'n him for a prey.¹

Accordingly, the warning words which he had uttered at the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign were repeated with more determined energy as the crisis drew nearer. Every common event of life was colored with the hues of the time. The unshaken fidelity of the little colony of Rechabites to their ancestral customs suggested the contrast of the broken vows of Israel.² The potter's work in the valley of Hinnom, with its surrounding scenes of the sacrifices of Tophet, filled his mind with lessons of the greatness of the designs of God, guided not by fate or caprice, but by the moral deserts of men.³ He stood with his scroll in his hand, containing all the prophecies of the last two and twenty years, as though it were a bowl of deadly wine

Warnings
 of Jere-
 miah.

¹ Jer. xlv. 4, 5. *Christian Year*,
 11th Sunday after Trinity.

² Jer. xxxv. 14-16.

³ Ibid. xviii. — xix. 11.

which nation after nation was to drink ; and as though he saw king upon king, and throne upon throne, reeling, staggering, sickening, with the dreadful draught.¹ At every stage of his preaching, the "theological hatred" of the ancient Church grew fiercer and fiercer. He had touched the teachers in their tenderest point by declaring that they had ceased to be necessary. They could not bear to hear that a time was coming when the law should perish from the Priest, and counsel from the wise, and the word from the Prophet.² He on his side, as he seemed to be hemmed in closer and closer, was wound up to a fiercer strain in return. He stood in the accursed valley of Hinnom once again, and from the potter's store held up an earthenware vessel before the shuddering Priests and Elders, and dashed it in fragments on the ground, with the warning cry that thus should Jerusalem and its people be shivered to pieces.³ Whilst his hearers stood awestruck in the valley beneath, the Prophet, wrought to a yet loftier pitch, mounted the steep hill-side, and poured forth the same burning invectives⁴ within the Temple courts. Then, and not till then, the Priestly officer, who had special charge of the Temple, seized him, and immured him in a prison, where he was fixed in a rack⁵ or pilory, apparently used as the common punishment of unpopular Prophets. For a moment his spirit rose to one of his wildest and sternest denunciations, and then, as if overstrained by the effort, he sank back into the deepest gloom,⁶ — the gloom of many a lofty soul which feels itself misunderstood by men, which can hardly believe that it is not deserted by God.

¹ Jer. xxv. 1-29.

² Ibid. xvii. 18.

³ Ibid. xix. 1, 11.

⁴ Ibid. xix. 15.

⁵ Jer. xx. 2 ; xxix. 26 ; comp. 2 Chr. xvi. 10 ; Acts xvi. 24.

⁶ Ibid. xx. 3-18.

In this deep distress, one faithful friend is by his side, his Elisha, his Timotheus, — Baruch, the son of Neriah. In their prison, or their hiding-place, he heard the rumors of the great events which filled the minds and thoughts of the whole people. It was then that the resolution was taken of committing to Recitation of Baruch. writing all the scattered prophecies of the last troubled years. Baruch was skilled in the art, and from Jeremiah's dictation, on a roll of parchment, divided into columns, with the ink and reed which, as a scribe, he always carried with him, he wrote down the impassioned warnings which Jeremiah had already spoken,¹ which were intended, like the newly discovered Law in Josiah's reign, to warn the King and nobles to a sense of their danger. It was determined to seize the occasion of a public fast to make the hazardous experiment. On that day, a wintry day in December, Baruch appeared in the chamber of a friendly noble, Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, which was apparently over the new gateway already mentioned. There, from the window or balcony of the chamber, or from the platform or pillar on which the Kings had stood on solemn occasions, he recited the long alternation of lament and invective to the vast congregation, assembled for the national fast.² Micaiah, the son of his host, alarmed by what he heard, descended the Temple hill, and communicated it to the Princes who, as usual through these disturbed reigns, were seated in council in the palace, in the apartments of the chief secretary. One of them, Jehudi, the descendant of a noble house, acted apparently as an agent or spokesman of the rest, and was sent to summon Baruch to their presence. He³ sat down in

¹ Jer. xxxvi. 2; xxv. 13.

² See Lecture XXXVII.

³ Jer. xxxvi. 15; comp. Luke iv. 20.

the attitude of an Eastern teacher, and as he went on his recital struck terror into the hearts of his hearers. They saw his danger; they charged him and his master to conceal themselves, and deposited the sacred scroll in the chamber where they had heard it, whilst they announced to the fierce and lawless King its fearful contents. A third time it was recited — this time not by Baruch, but by the courtier Jehudi — to the King as he sat warming himself over the charcoal brazier, with his princes standing round him. Three or four columns exhausted the royal patience. He seized a knife, such as Eastern scribes wear for the sake of erasures, cut the parchment into strips, and threw it into the brazier till it was burnt to ashes. Those who had heard from their fathers of the effect produced on Josiah by the recital of the warnings of Deuteronomy, might well be startled at the contrast. None of those well-known signs of astonishment and grief were seen; neither King nor attendants rent their clothes. It was an outrage long remembered. Baruch, in his hiding-place, was overwhelmed with despair¹ at this failure of his mission. But Jeremiah had now ceased to waver. He bade his timid disciple take up the pen, and record once more the terrible messages. The country was doomed. It was only individuals who could be saved. But the Divine oracle could not be destroyed in the destruction of its outward framework. It was the new form of the vision of the “Bush burning, but not consumed;” a sacred book, the form in which Divine truths were now first beginning to be known, burnt as sacred books have been burnt again and again, in the persecutions of the fourth or of the sixteenth century, yet multiplied by that very cause; springing from the flames to do their

¹ Jer. xlv. 3.

work, living in the voice and life of men, even when their outward letter seemed to be lost. "Then took "Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the "scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote therein from the "mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which "Jehoiakim, the King of Judah, had burned in the fire, "and there were added besides unto them many like "words."¹ In this record of the Prophet's feeling, thus emphasized by his own repetition, is contained the germ of the "Liberty of Unlicensed Printing," the inexhaustible vitality of the written word. This is the first recorded instance of the formation of a Canonical Book, and of the special purpose of its formation. "The Book " now, as often afterwards, was to be the death-blow of the old regal, aristocratic, sacerdotal exclusiveness, as represented in Jehoiakim. The "Scribe," now first rising into importance in the person of Baruch, to supply the defects of the living Prophet, was as the printing-press, in far later ages, supplying the defects both of Prophet and Scribe, and handing on the words of truth which else might have irretrievably perished.

We return to the thin thread of the gradually breaking monarchy. The King, possibly in consequence of the repeated entreaties of the Prophet, submitted to the Chaldæan power; but, with the fickleness which belonged to his character, immediately revolted again; and, in the inroad of the neighboring hostile tribes, let loose, according to the policy of Nebuchadnezzar, against their ancient enemy, the calamities of the country seemed to reach their culmination.² In this confusion and alarm the reign of Jehoiakim closed amidst a shade of deep melancholy and almost mystery, which well expresses the national

¹ Jer. xxxvi. 32.

² 2 Kings xxiv. 2.

feeling respecting it. According to one version, the city was besieged, the Temple was plundered of many of its sacred vessels, and the King himself taken captive.¹ According to a second, the Chaldæan troops² entered Jerusalem on friendly terms, and then seized and killed the King and the chiefs of the State. According to a third, he died peacefully at home,³ and was buried in the garden of Uzza by the side of his grandfather Manasseh, and his father Josiah. According to a fourth, which well expresses the detestation in which his memory was held, there were no funeral dirges over him as there had been over his father and brother; but his corpse was thrown out, like that of a dead ass, outside the walls of Jerusalem,⁴ exposed to the burning sun by day, and the wasting frost by night.⁵ And this prophetic curse was darkened with a yet deeper hue by the legend which described how, on the skin of the dead corpse, as it thus lay exposed, there appeared in distinct Hebrew characters the name of the demon Codonazer, to whom he had sold himself.⁶

In the disorder which followed on Jehoiakim's death or exile, his son Jeconiah or Coniah, who assumed either his father's name,⁷ Jehoiakim, or that of Jehoiachin, "the Lord's Appointed," was raised

Jehoiachin.
B. C. 598.

¹ 2 Chr. xxxvi. 7. The siege of Jerusalem, which in Dan. i. 1 is placed in the third year of Jehoiakim, is in 2 Chr. xxxvi. 5, 6, 8 placed in the eleventh year. Much of this obscurity may arise from the confusion of Jehoiakim with Jehoiachin, see 2 Kings xxiv. 8 (LXX.).

² Josephus, *Ant.* x. 6, § 3.

³ 2 Kings xxiv. 6; 2 Chr. xxxvi. 8 (LXX.). It is possible that in any case his corpse may have been ultimately interred there. Compare the

curse of Zedekiah, Jeremiah xxxiv. 5.

⁴ Jer. xxii. 18, 19. Although this is only a prediction, yet the fact of its being recorded would seem to imply that it had been fulfilled.

⁵ Ibid. xxxvi. 30.

⁶ See the tradition quoted by Thenius (on 2 Kings xxv. 1), probably suggested by 2 Chr. xxxvi. 8; Hab. ii. 9 ("that which was found in him" and "the power of evil").

⁷ 2 Kings xxiv. 8, 12 (LXX.).

to the throne. His mother, Nehushta, the daughter of one of the chief nobles, occupied the position, great even in this last extremity of the house, of Queen-mother. His short reign of three months is wrapped in obscurity and contradiction. But whether, as by one report, he was a little child,¹ or by another a full-grown youth;² whether a prince, headstrong and violent,³ or kind and gentle,⁴ he attracted a peculiar sympathy in his fall, as the last of the lion⁵ cubs of the tribe of Judah, the last direct heir⁶ of the house of David. At the first onslaught of the Babylonian army on Jerusalem, he and his mother⁷ Nehushta, unwilling to expose the city to a siege, sate down as suppliants before the conqueror. The golden ornaments⁸ of the Temple were rudely hacked off and carried to Babylon; and thither also the King himself, the Queen-mother, the royal harem, the nobles and priests, and a certain number, variously stated,⁹ of soldiers, artificers, and smiths.

The nation reeled under the blow. It seemed to them as if the signet-ring of His promises were torn off from the hand of God Himself. It could hardly be believed that the young Prince, the last of his race, should be cast away like a broken idol and despised vessel,¹⁰ and that the voice of the young lion should be no more heard on the mountains of Israel;¹¹ that the topmost and tenderest shoot of the royal cedar-tree should have been plucked off by the Eagle of the East, and planted

¹ 2-Chr. xxxvi. 9.

² 2 Kings xxiv. 8.

³ Ibid. xxiv. 9; Ezek. xix. 6.

⁴ Joseph. *Ant.* x. 7, § 1.

⁵ Ezek. xix. 6.

⁶ Jer. xxii. 30.

⁷ Ibid. xiii. 18 (Heb.); xxii. 26;

xxiv. 12.

⁸ 2 Kings xxiv. 13 (Heb. and Thenius).

⁹ More than 10,000 in 2 Kings xxiv. 14, 15; 3023 in all in Jer. lii. 28.

¹⁰ Jer. xxii. 24, 28.

¹¹ Ezek. xix. 8.

far away in the merchant-city of the Euphrates.¹ From the top of Lebanon, from the heights of Bashan, from the ridges of Abarim, the widowed country shrieked aloud, as she saw the train of her captive King and nobles disappearing in the distant East.² From the heights of Hermon, from the top of Mizar, it is no improbable conjecture that the departing King poured forth that exquisitely plaintive song, in which, from the deep disquietude of his heart, he longs after the presence of God in the Temple, and pleads his cause against the impious nation, the treacherous and unjust man, who, in spite of plighted faith,³ had torn him away from his beloved home. With straining eyes, the Jewish people and Prophets still hung on the hope that their last prince would be speedily restored to them. The gate through which he left the city was walled up, like that by which the last Moorish king left Granada, and was long known as the Gate of Jeconiah. From his captivity, as from a decisive era, the subsequent years of the history were reckoned.⁴ The tidings were treasured up with a mournful pleasure, that, in the distant Babylon, where, with his royal mother,⁵ he was to end his days, after many years of imprisonment, the curse of childlessness, pronounced upon him⁶ by the Prophet, was removed; and that, as he grew to man's estate, a race of no less than eight sons were born to him, by whom the royal race of Judah was carried on;⁷ and yet more, that he had been kindly treated by the successor⁸ of his captor; that he took precedence of all

¹ Ezek. xvii. 4.

⁵ Jer. xxii. 26; 2 Kings xxiv. 15.

² Jer. xxii. 20 (Heb.) 23.

⁶ Jer. xxii. 30.

³ Ps. xlii. 1, 2; xliii. 1, 2 (Ewald).
See Lecture IX.

⁷ 1 Chr. iii. 17, 18; comp. Sus.
1-4.

⁴ Ezek. i. 2; viii. 1; xxiv. 1; xxvi.
1; xxix. 1; xxxi. 1.

⁸ 2 Kings xxv. 27-30; Jer. lii. 31-
34. There was a Rabbinical tradition

of the subject Kings at the table of the Babylonian monarch; that his prison garments and his prison fare were changed to something like his former royal state. With this tender recollection of the unfortunate Prince, the historical records, not only of himself but of the monarchy, abruptly come to an end. But the traditions of him "still linger in the close," and more than one sacred legend — enshrined in the Sacred Books of many an ancient Christian Church — tells how he, with the other captives, sate on the banks¹ of the Euphrates, and shed bitter tears, as they heard the messages of their brethren in Palestine; or how he dwelt in a sumptuous house and fair gardens, with his beautiful wife Susannah, "more honorable than all others."²

The feeling of sympathy with Jehoiachin extended itself, not only to the King but to his companions in exile. In a homely but expressive figure the contrast is represented to Jeremiah between the miserable dregs that were left, and the promise of those that were taken. Two baskets of figs were placed before him — the one containing figs "good, very good, and the evil, "very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil."³ With the exiles there were indeed some of the choicest spirits of the nation, — Ezekiel, second only to Jeremiah himself in the Prophets of this epoch; and, it may be added with some hesitation, Kish, the ancestor of Mordecai;⁴ and Daniel with his three companions.⁵ To

that Evilmerodach's kindness arose from his acquaintance with Jehoiachin, in the prison into which he had himself been thrown by an expression of pleasure at Nebuchadnezzar's illness. It probably was really an act of grace on his accession. (Thenius on 2 Kings xxv. 27.)

¹ Baruch i. 3, 4. The "Sud" ap-

pears to be a corruption of the Arabic name for the Euphrates.

² Susanna 1 – 4. See Africanus, *ad Orig.* (Routh, *Rel. Sacr.* ii. 113), who identifies Joachim with Jehoiachin.

³ Jer. xxiv. 3.

⁴ Esther ii. 5, 6.

⁵ In Dan i. 1, Daniel's captivity is

these fellow-countrymen Jeremiah addressed his consolations in a letter,¹ which may have first suggested the epistolary form as a model of Prophetic communications, to be afterwards adopted by the Christian Apostles. On the new commonwealth then rising up a new hope might be founded. Two generations were to pass away, and then a joyful return might be expected.

It might have seemed that the mere fragment that remained in Palestine was hardly worth preserving. But so long as the Holy City and the Temple stood, so long as the torch of David's house was not utterly extinguished, there was still the chance that, even under the shelter of Babylon, the essential conditions of the True Religion might be maintained. One son of Josiah Zedekiah. was still left, Mattaniah, the father of Jehoahaz, B. C. 598-587. and uncle of the late King Jehoiachin.² As the last notes of Jeremiah's dirge over Jehoiachin died away, he had burst forth into one of those strains of hope, in which he represented the future Ruler of Israel as the "Righteousness or Justice of Jehovah."³ It may be that, in allusion to this, the new King assumed that name, Zedek-Jah, on his accession to the throne. He was a mere youth, but not without noble feelings, which, in a less critical moment, might have saved the state. Like some of his predecessors he endeavored, by a solemn sacrificial league with his people, to secure a reformation which ordinary motives would have failed to obtain. In this instance he acted apparently under

assigned to Jehoiakim, in part confirmed by 2 Chr. xxxvi. 7. Josephus (*Ant.* x. 6, § 3) refers Ezekiel to this period, and (*Ant.* x. 10, § 1) Daniel to Zedekiah's exile.

¹ Jer. xxix. 1-14.

² In 2 Chr. xxxvi. 10, he is the brother of Jehoiachin. Comp. 1 Chr. iii. 16.

³ Jer. xxiii. 5-7.

the high moral teaching of Jeremiah. As in the old patriarchal times, a calf was killed and cut in two; and between the divided parts the nobles, the court, and the Priesthood of Judah passed, to pledge themselves to the abolition of at least one long-standing grievance, and to cause a general emancipation of the Jews and Jewesses who, by neglect of the Mosaic ordinances, had become slaves.¹

In foreign matters also the policy of Jeremiah for a time prevailed. The King sent an embassy to Babylon by two of the nobles² who had most heartily befriended the Prophet, and at last, accompanied by a third³ of the same group, himself made the journey, and there took a solemn oath of allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar, sworn by the sacred name of Elohim, which both Israelite and Babylonian alike acknowledged. In defiance of this oath, and, as would appear, immediately after he had made it, Zedekiah put himself at the head of a league of the neighboring kings against the Chaldæan power. It is characteristic of the high standard of Prophetic morality, that the violation of this oath, though made to a heathen sovereign, was regarded as the crowning vice of the weak King of Judah. "Shall he prosper? Shall he escape that doeth such things? Shall he break the covenant? In the place where the king dwelleth that made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant he despised, with him in the midst of Babylon shall he die."⁴ In the midst of wild hopes and dark intrigues, excited by the revolt, Jeremiah appeared once

Last struggle of Jeremiah.

¹ Jer. xxxiv. 8, 9, 19; comp. Gen. xv. 10, 17.

³ Seraiah, Jer. li. 59.

² Elasah and Gemariah, Jer. xxix. 25.

⁴ Ezek. xvii. 14, 18; xv. 8; xxi.

more in the streets of Jerusalem, with a wooden collar round his neck, such as those by which the chains of prisoners were fastened, — a living personification of the coming captivity. In this strange guise he went round to the ambassadors from Phoenicia and the trans-Jordanic nations, to the King himself, and finally to the Priests in the Temple.¹ He was treated alternately as a traitor and a madman.² Louder and louder round him rose the cry of the Prophets³ on all sides, in behalf of a determined resistance to the national enemy. At the head of this Prophetic band was Hananiah, from the priestly city of Gibeon, and therefore probably, like Jeremiah, a Priest. The two Prophets stood confronted in the Temple court. On the one side was the watchword, “Ye shall not serve the King of Babylon;” on the other side, “Serve the King of Babylon and live.”⁴ The controversy between them, taking its form from the scene and the audience, turned, as often happens, not on the main principles at issue, but on the comparatively trivial question of the sacred vessels of the Temple; Hananiah maintaining that those which were already gone would, in two years, entirely return; Jeremiah, with the sadder and larger view, maintaining that to recall the past was impossible, and that the last hope now was to do the best for the retention of those that remained to them — not, however, without a pathetic wish that his rival’s more hopeful prediction might be fulfilled.⁵ For the moment, Hananiah seemed to triumph in the superior confidence of his cause. He tore the wooden collar from Jeremiah’s neck, and snapped it asunder, as a

¹ Jer. xxvii. 1–22.

² Joseph. *Ant.* x. 7, § 4.

³ Jer. xxvii. 9, 14.

⁴ Jer. xxviii. 1–17.

⁵ Ibid. xxvii. 16–22; xxviii. 2, 3.

sign that in two years the deliverance would come. In this conflict of mixed emotions, Jeremiah left the Temple courts, never to return to them. Only to Hananiah he appeared, with the dark warning that, for the broken yoke of wood he had, by his false encouragements, forged a still harder yoke of iron, and that within that year he himself should die.¹ He died, in fact, within two months from the time, and in him passed away the last echo of the ancient invincible strain of the age of Isaiah.

Death of
Hananiah.

The controversy respecting the sacred vessels seems to have been solved by the King's ordering a silver set to be made instead of the golden service which had been lost.² But the intended revolt still continued, and in direct violation³ of the treaty with Babylon, the King formed an alliance with Egypt, against which Jeremiah in Jerusalem, and Ezekiel from the far East, protested in vain. The Chaldæan forces poured into the country. With bitter sighs, with melting hearts, with feeble hands, with fainting spirits, with failing knees, the dreadful tidings were announced.⁴ A sword, furbished, and sharpened, and glittering, seemed to leap from the Divine scabbard,⁵ like that which in the siege of Titus was believed to flame across the heavens. There was a doubt for a moment at the dividing of the great Babylonian roads,⁶ whether the army should proceed against Rabbath of Ammon, or Jerusalem of Judah. The Chaldæan King stood at the parting of the ways. He made his arrows of divination bright, he consulted with images, he looked on the sacrifice. All the omens pointed to Jerusalem,

Chaldæan
invasion.

¹ Jer. xxviii. 12-17.

² Baruch i. 8.

³ Joseph. *Ant.* x. 7, § 1.

⁴ Ezek. xxi. 7.

⁵ Ibid. xxi. 9-11.

⁶ Ibid. xxi. 19-22.

and to Jerusalem he came. Palestine was overrun, and Jerusalem, with the two strong southern fortresses of Lachish and Azekah, alone remained unshaken. At this emergency the Egyptian army appeared, and the Chaldæans raised the siege. It was like that critical moment in the last war of the Jews, when the temporary withdrawal of the Roman forces from Jerusalem left a pause before the final overthrow. Some fled into the camp of the enemy; some to the hills beyond the Jordan; some, like frightened doves, to the mountains of Judea.¹ Within the city, the nobles once more regained their ascendancy over the King, and the forced emancipation of their slaves was revoked. Against this injustice Jeremiah raised his voice, in accents worthy of Amos or Micah.² It was his last public address. He saw too clearly the coming catastrophe, and was on the point of escaping from Jerusalem to end his days in his own loved village of Anathoth.³ At the northern gate of the Temple, "the gate of Benjamin,"⁴ he was arrested by the officer of the guard, on the not unnatural supposition that he was deserting to the Chaldæans. The nobles, delighted to have their enemy in their power, beat him, and then imprisoned him in a dungeon, formed out of the wall in the house of Jonathan the royal scribe. The King, hardly venturing to act for himself, secretly caused him to be removed, heard once more his fearless warning and piteous entreaty, and placed him in a more easy confinement in the court of a prison attached to the palace.⁵ The King and the

Imprison-
ment of Jer-
emiah.

¹ Ezek. vii. 16; xxxiv. 7; xxxvii. 5-12.

² Jer. xxxiv. 17-22.

³ Ibid. xxxvii. 13-15.

⁴ Jer. xxxvii. 13; xx. 2; Zech. xiv. 10.

⁵ Jer. xxxvii. 16-21.

nobles still sent to ask his counsel, and still his answer was the same. Those who received his message gave the alarm, and the princes insisted on his removal to a place of greater security, as they could not expose the loyalty and courage of the people to warnings of so disastrous and dispiriting a tenor. The weak King was unable to resist them, and the Prophet was taken to the house of one of his most determined enemies, and let down into a deep well, from which the water had been dried, but of which the bottom was deep in slime, into which he sank, and would probably have perished, either from hunger or suffocation.¹ It is difficult not to imagine a connection between this incident and the 69th Psalm:² "I sink "in the mire, where there is no bottom. Deliver me "out of the mire that I sink not: let not the well "shut its mouth upon me." "Reproach hath broken "my heart: I am sick, and I looked for some to take "pity; but there was none, and for comforters, and "I found none." Such a comforter, however, was at hand,—one of the Ethiopian guards of the royal harem, known by the name of "the King's Slave." Ebed-Melech found the King sitting in the great northern entrance of the Temple, and obtained a revocation of the order; and then, under the protection of a strong guard, proceeded, with a detailed care, which the Prophet seems gratefully to record, to throw down a mass of soft rags from the royal wardrobe to ease the rough ropes with which he drew him out of the well.³ One more secret interview the Prophet had with the King, carefully concealed from the imperious nobles, and was then remanded to his former

¹ Jer. xxxviii. 1-6; xxi. 1-10.

³ Jer. xxxviii. 7-13.

² Ps. lxix. 2, 14, 15, 20.

state prison, where he remained secluded during the rest of the siege, though with a certain amount of freedom, and with the companionship of his faithful Baruch.¹ Two striking scenes enlivened this solitude. One was his grateful remembrance of his Ethiopian benefactor,² whose safety in the coming troubles he positively predicted. The other was his interview with his cousin Hanameel.³ He was sitting in the open court which enclosed the prison, with many of the citizens of Jerusalem round him. Suddenly his cousin entered with the offer, startling at that moment of universal confusion, to sell the ancestral plot of ground at their native Anathoth, of which, in the fall of their family, Jeremiah was the last and nearest heir. Had the Prophet been less assured of the ultimate return of his people, he might well have hesitated at a proposal which seemed only like the mockery that he had before encountered from his townsmen. But he felt assured that the present cloud would pass away, and, with a noble confidence, which has often been compared to that of the Roman senator who bought the ground occupied by the camp of Hannibal, formally purchased the field in the presence of Baruch and the assembled Jews; and then broke out, once and again, first in prose and then in poetry, into the expressions of his perfect conviction that, after the misery of siege and captivity, the land of Palestine should be again peaceably bought and sold, and that for all future ages the royal family of David and the Levitical tribe should exercise their functions in a spirit of justice never before known within the walls of Jerusalem.⁴ It is not the only time in the history

¹ Jer. xxxviii. 14-28; xxxvi. 4, 5.

² Ibid. xxxix. 15-18.

³ Jer. xxxii. 6-15.

⁴ Ibid. xxxii. 16-44.

of States and Churches that he who has been denounced as a deserter and traitor, becomes in the last extremity the best comforter and counsellor. Demosthenes, who had warned his fellow-countrymen in his earlier days against their excessive confidence, in his later days was the only man who could reassure their excessive despondency. Herder, who in his earlier days had been attacked by contemporary theologians as a heretic, was, as years rolled on, invoked as their only help against the rising tide of unbelief. Let all such, in every age, accept the omen of the mingled darkness and light which marks the vicissitudes of the career of Jeremiah.

The siege had now set in once more, and for the last time. The nation never forgot the month and the day on which the armies of Chaldæa finally invested the city. It was in January, on the tenth day of the tenth month. It was felt as the day of the deepest gloom by the Israelite exiles.¹ It has been commemorated as a fast, the fast of Tebeth, ever since in the Jewish Church. Round the walls were reared the gigantic mounds by which Eastern armies conducted their approaches to besieged cities,² and which were surmounted by forts overtopping the walls. To make room for these, the houses which the Kings of Judah had built outside for pleasant retreats were swept away.³ The vassal kings of Babylon had their thrones planted in view of each of the gates.⁴ Famine and its accompanying visitation of pestilence⁵ ravaged the crowded population within the walls. The store of bread was gradually exhausted.⁶ It was only by a

The siege.
B. C. 587.

¹ Ezek. xxiv. 1-27.

⁵ Josephus, *Ant.* x. 7, § 4; 8, § 1;

² Jer. xxxii. 24; lii. 4; Ezek. iv. 2. Baruch ii. 25; Ezek. v. 12.

³ Jer. xxxiii. 4.

⁶ Jer. lii. 6.

⁴ Ibid. i. 15.

special favor of the King that a daily supply was sent to Jeremiah in his prison from the baker's quarter, and at last even this failed.¹ The nobles,² who had prided themselves on their beautiful complexions, "purer than snow, whiter than milk, ruddy as rubies, polished as sapphires," had become ghastly and black with starvation. Their wasted skeleton forms could hardly be recognized in the streets. The ladies of Jerusalem, in their magnificent crimson robes, might be seen sitting in despair on the dunghills.³ From these foul heaps were gathered morsels to eke out the failing supply of food. There was something specially piteous in the sight of the little children, with their parched tongues, fainting in the streets, asking for bread, crying to their mothers for corn and wine.⁴ There was something still more terrible in the hardened feeling with which the parents turned away from them. The Hebrew mothers seem to have lost the instincts even of the brute creation, to have sunk to the level of the unnatural ostriches that leave their nests in the wilderness.⁵ Fathers devoured the flesh of their own sons⁶ and their own daughters. The hands even of compassionate mothers have sodden their own children,⁷ the mere infants just born. Yet even in this extremity the inhabitants held out. There was still one corner of the city open, that which commanded the road to Jericho, and, along this, occasional sallies were made to obtain provisions, but were almost always repulsed by the wild Arab tribes who hung on the outskirts of the

¹ Jer. xxxvii. 21; xxxviii. 9; Ezek. iv. 16; v. 16; xii. 19.

² Lam. iv. 7, 8; v. 10 (Heb. and Ewald).

³ Ibid. iv. 5; Ezek. iv. 12, 15.

⁴ Lam. ii. 11, 12, 19; iv. 4.

⁵ Ibid. iv. 3.

⁶ Ezek. v. 10; Baruch ii. 3.

⁷ Lam. ii. 20; iv. 10.

Chaldæan camp.¹ Against the huge engines of Asiatic warfare, the besieged citizens constructed counter-engines, and (such was the Jewish tradition) the struggle was worthy of the occasion ; a combat or duel, not only of courage but of skill and intelligence, between Babylon and Jerusalem.²

So wore away the eighteen months of the siege. Some, doubtless of the Priestly and Prophetic orders,³ shaved their heads, and clothed themselves in sackcloth, and cast their gold and silver into the streets, as the extreme offerings of despair. Others, of the more heathen faction, like the Roman Pontiff reviving the Etruscan rites during the siege of Alaric, renewed with intenser fanaticism the charms and amulets of necromancy, and even in the courts of the Temple might be heard the loud wail of Hebrew women for their lost Thammuz ; and in the subterranean chambers might be seen seventy elders throwing up their clouds of incense before the monstrous shapes of Egyptian idolatry ; or, in the sacred space in front of the Temple, another band, prostrate before the rising sun.⁴ They could not believe that the end was near. They still looked forward, with that passion for architecture which seems to have possessed this last period of the monarchy, to building new houses, and to enjoying new luxuries. One of these chiefs dropped dead, it may be, from famine or fever, in the very moment of his selfish exultation.⁵

But the end was now indeed near. "An evil, an only evil, behold it is come." "An end is come, the end is come : it watcheth for thee ; behold, it is come. The

¹ Lam. v. 9.

² Joseph. *Ant.* x. 8, § 1.

³ Ezek. vii. 18, 19.

⁴ Ezek. viii. 8, 11, 14, 16 ; xi. 1-4.

⁵ Ibid. xi. 13.

“dawn of the dreadful day is come: the time is come; “the day of trouble is near; not now the mere echo of “the mountains. The day is come; the dawn is past; “the time is come; the day draweth near.”¹ So with a reiteration which recalls the like cry of the Apocalyptic seer at Patmos, the Prophet saw the gradual approach of the catastrophe.

It was at midnight,² on the ninth day of the fourth month, — answering to July, — still kept as a fast by the Jewish nation, that the breach was made in the walls. By that time the famine had so exhausted the inhabitants, that there was no further power of resistance. The entrance was effected by the northern gate.³ Through the darkness of the night, lit up, if at all, only by the nine days’ moon, the Chaldæan guards silently made their way from street to street, till they suddenly appeared in the centre of the Temple court, in the middle gateway which opened directly on the great brazen altar. Never before had such a spectacle been seen in the inviolable sanctuary of Jerusalem. The number, the titles, of the chiefs who took the chief places were all recorded. They were six. Two of them bore a name famous in the Babylonian annals, — Nergal-Sharezer, or Neriglissar; two were known only by their official designation, — the Chief of the Eunuchs and the Chief of the Magicians; the other two were Samgar-nebo and Sarsechim.⁴ These sate like kings in the lofty archway. Round them were the lesser princes of the Chaldæan court. By their side stood, or seemed to stand, one clothed in a long

¹ Ezek. vii. 2-12.

² Josephus, *Ant.* x. 8, § 2.

³ Ezek. ix. 2.

⁴ Jer. xxxix. 3. It can hardly be doubted that “the six” of Ezek. ix.

2 are here intended, Josephus (*Ant.* x. 8, § 2) gives them somewhat differently, but with an evident aim at unusual precision, — “These are their names if any one seeks to know.”

white linen robe, with the inkhorn of an Eastern scribe in his girdle.¹ Was it the invisible messenger thus made visible for a moment in the Prophetic vision? or was it the Royal Recorder, always attendant on the great King, and thus used as a symbol of the Recording and Protecting Angel? Then the sleeping city woke. It might well seem as if from the desecrated Temple was heard the rushing wings of the departing cherubs,² as if Jehovah had indeed cast off the altar,³ round which these savage warriors stood, the sanctuary, which they had made their own. A clang and cry resounded through the silent precincts at that dead hour of night, as if with the tumult of the great festivals. The first victims were those who, whether from religious or superstitious feelings and duties, were habitual occupants of the sacred buildings; the princes who there pursued their idolatrous rites; the Prophets who crowded there in the vain hope that the Temple was impregnable; the young Levites and Priests who were bound to defend the sacred shrine with their swords and lives.⁴ The virgin marble of the courts ran red with blood, like a rocky winepress in the vintage.⁵

The alarm soon spread to the palace. In the twilight⁶ of the early summer dawn, these dreadful scenes were dimly discerned from the palace below; and before the sun had risen, the King, with his wives and children, and the royal guard, escaped, not ^{The flight of Zedekiah.} by any of the regular gates, but by a passage broken through a narrow alley, confined between two walls,⁷ at the southeastern corner of the city, which the Chaldæan

¹ Ezek. ix. 2, 11; x. 2.

⁵ Lam. i. 15.

² Ibid. x. 18.

⁶ Ezek. xii. 6, 12.

³ Lam. ii. 7.

⁷ Jer. xxxix. 4; Kings xxv. 4;

⁴ 2 Chr. xxxvi. 17; Lam. ii. 21; Joseph. *Ant.* x. 8, § 2. i. 15.

army had not been able completely to invest. They passed out with their heads muffled,¹ either for disguise, or to express their sense of the greatness of the calamity,² and bearing on their shoulders such articles of value as they hoped to save. As in the case of David, the object of the King was to escape to the east of the Jordan. He and his companions descended, unobserved, by the royal gardens, and down the steep descent to Jericho. There he was overtaken by the Chaldaean soldiers, who had³ received intelligence of his flight from deserters; and in that wide plain, the scene of the first triumph of Joshua, was fought the last fight of the expiring monarchy. His troops fled,⁴ and were scattered to the winds. "Swifter than the eagles of heaven they pursued" the fugitives⁵ down "the mountains" of the pass of Adummim, "and laid wait for him in the wilderness" of the Jordan valley. In him and his royal house the spirit of David held out to the last, and when he was ensnared, like a lion⁶ in the hunter's net, the weakness of his character was forgotten in the greatness of his fall, and a long sigh was heaved in remembrance of the opportunity that had still been open to him. "The breath of our nostrils, the Anointed of the Lord,"⁷ is taken in their pits, of "whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen." He and his family were carried off in chains to Riblah, where Nebuchadnezzar was encamped awaiting the double result of the sieges of Jerusalem and of Tyre. Even at this final moment it was the vengeance of his broken oath⁸ that

¹ Ezek. xii. 6, 12.

² See Lecture XXIV.

³ Joseph. *Ant.* x. 8, § 2.

⁴ Ibid. Jer. lii. 8; Ezek. xii. 14.

⁵ Lam. iv. 19.

⁶ Ezek. xii. 13; xvii. 20.

⁷ Lam. iv. 20.

⁸ Joseph. *Ant.* x. 8, § 2.

pursued the unfortunate Prince, alike from the exiled Prophet¹ and from the conquering King.

A solemn judgment was pronounced upon him. His courtiers and his sons were executed in his sight; and then, according to the barbarous usage of the East, his eyes were put out, and he was taken to Babylon, where, according to later traditions, he worked like a slave in a mill,—a fate the more tragical, because contrasted with the comparative ease of his nephew Jehoiachin. The singularity of his fate is made by Josephus the chief argument for the predictive power of the ancient Prophets, as reconciling, in this unexpected manner, the apparent discrepancy between Jeremiah and Ezekiel.²

There was a long suspense at Jerusalem. It was not till nearly a month had elapsed, the tenth day of the fifth month, a day again memorable in Jewish annals, as a “day of misery,” when the siege of Titus closed in like manner,—a day tragical as the 10th of August in European history,—that Nebuzaradan, captain of the royal guard, came with orders from Nebuchadnezzar to put the finishing stroke to the work of destruction. The Temple, the palace, the houses of the nobles, were deliberately set on fire. The very bones and framework of Jerusalem appeared to be wrapped in flames. The walls and gates seemed to lament and cry, as they sunk into the earth. The sepulchres, even the consecrated catacombs of the Kings, were opened, and the bodies thrown out to the vultures and beasts of prey, which flocked to their frightful feast outside the walls.³ Jackals wandered even over the sacred hill of Zion.⁴ Some of the princes

The exile of
Zedekiah.

The de-
struction of
the city.

¹ Ezek. xvii. 20.

³ Jer. viii. 1; Ps. lxxix. 2, 3.

² Joseph. *Ant.* x. 8, § 2, 3.

⁴ Lam. v. 18.

were hung up by their hands on the Temple walls; others were carried off to execution at Riblah,¹ including the two Chief Priests and other great officers of the court and camp that were found in the city. The havoc and carnage in the streets was such that passers-by avoided every one they met, lest they should be defiled by their bloody touch.² Age and youth, men and women, alike fell victims to the passion or cruelty of the conqueror.³ The spoils of the Temple, those sacred vessels whose fate had been so furiously contested by the Prophets of the contending factions, were swept away to adorn the temples or tables of the Babylonian court; and there is a pathetic earnestness in the tone of the historian, as he tells how even the brazen laver, even those two beautiful pillars, which had remained uninjured through so many devastations, which had seemed the pledges of durability and stability, at last, with all their prized and delicate ornaments, were broken to pieces, and carried off as mere fragments of metal⁴ to Babylon, never to return. In the remains of the population of the Samaritan kingdom it is affecting to see that all sense of ancient rivalry was lost in the grief of the common calamity. Pilgrims from the ancient capitals of Ephraim, Samaria, Shechem, and Shiloh came flocking with shorn beards, gashed faces, torn clothes, and loud wailings, to offer incense on the ruined Temple, which was not their own.⁵ But in the neighboring heathen tribes there was a savage exultation—more bitter to the heart of Judah than the calamity itself—in the thought that the Divine Inheritance had now passed into their hands.⁶ There was the

¹ 2 Kings xxv. 18–20.

² Lam. iv. 14, 15.

³ Ibid. v. 11–13; 2 Chr. xxxvi. 17.

⁴ 2 Kings xxv. 16, 17.

⁵ Jer. xli. 5.

⁶ Ps. lxxix. 1.

fierce Ammonite clapping his hands and stamping with his feet, and the cold-blooded Moabite calmly reviewing the descent of the sacred city to the level of the surrounding nations.¹ The forgotten Philistine was there, reviving his "old hatred and spiteful heart."² Tyre, on her distant island, rejoiced in the fall of a powerful rival: "I shall be replenished, now that she is laid waste."² But deepest of all was the indignation roused by the sight of the nearest of kin, the race of Esau, often allied to Judah, often independent, now bound by the closest union with the power that was truly the common enemy of both. There was an intoxication⁴ of delight in the wild Edomite chiefs, as at each successive stroke against the venerable walls they shouted,⁵ "Down with it! down with it! even to the ground." They stood in the passes to intercept the escape of those who would have fled down to the Jordan valley; they betrayed the fugitives; they indulged their barbarous revels on the Temple hill.⁶ Long and loud has been the wail of execration which has gone up from the Jewish nation against Edom. It is the one imprecation which breaks forth from the Lamentations of Jeremiah; it is the culmination of the fierce threats of Ezekiel; it is the sole purpose of the short, sharp cry of Obadiah; it is the bitterest drop in the sad recollections of the Israelite captives by the waters of Babylon; and the one warlike strain of the Evangelical Prophet is inspired by the hope that the Divine Conqueror should come knee-deep in Idumean blood.⁷

Edom.

¹ Ezek. xxv. 6, 8.² Ibid. xxv. 15.³ Ibid. xxvi. 2.⁴ Lam. iv. 21.⁵ Ps. cxxxvii. 7; 1 Esdr. iv. 45.⁶ Obad. 14, 16.⁷ Lam. iv. 21, 22; Ezek. xxv. 8, 12-14; Obad. 1-16; Jer. xlix. 7-22; Ps. cxxxvii. 7; Isa. lxiii. 1-4.

It has been a not unnatural, though groundless, conclusion of later Jewish teachers, that the name of Edom represented the bitter enemy of Judaism in all future ages ; that Edom is the type and emblem of Rome ; that Cæsar and Titus were Edomites by descent ; that the soul of Esau still lingers in the Christian persecutors of the race of Israel.¹ It is an equally natural but hardly more warrantable thought, which has possessed the mind of many a Christian reader of these Prophecies, that in the desolation which, many centuries afterwards, began to brood over the rock-hewn habitations and tombs of Petra, were fulfilled the curses of the Jewish Prophets² on the eagle's nest and rocky clefts in which the sons of Esau had deemed themselves secure. The judgment on Edom, whatever it was, was exhausted when Edom itself passed away. The Roman Empire and the Christian Church have their own sins to answer for, without being loaded with the guilt of an ancient tribe, with which they had no connection. But the spirit of those stern Prophetic cries has an eternal meaning ; for they are the human expression of the Divine malediction on a sin common alike to East and West, to Churches, kingdoms, and individuals, — the sin most difficult to be forgiven, — the desertion of kinsmen by kinsmen, of friends by friends, the readiness to take advantage of the weaker side — hounding on the victorious party — “standing on the other side” in the day of the sorest need.³

So perished the city of David : —

“How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people ! how is she a widow, that was great among the nations ! and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary ! . . .

¹ *Seder Olam* (Meyer).

³ Obad. 11, 12.

² Jer. xlix. 16-18 ; Obad. 3, 4.

“Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass along the way? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, that hath been done unto me? wherewith Jehovah hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger.”

So bursts forth the elaborate dirge,¹ of which the oldest Jewish tradition² tells us that, “after the captivity of “Israel and the desolation of Jerusalem, Jeremiah sate “down and wept, and lamented his lamentation over “Jerusalem.” In the face of a rocky hill, on the western side of the city, the local belief has placed “the “Grotto of Jeremiah.” There, in that fixed attitude of grief, which Michael Angelo has immortalized, the Prophet may well be supposed to have mourned the fall of his country.

Lamenta-
tions of Jer-
emiah.

Even during the siege, Jeremiah was the centre of interest; much more as he now remained, amidst the ruin of all that he had loved, and had vainly struggled to preserve. His fame had penetrated to the camp of the Babylonian King, and Nebuzaradan had arrived at Jerusalem with strict orders to deal kindly with one who, in fact, had deserved so well from Chaldæa. He was taken out of his prison, and, with the manacles³ still on his wrists, was hurried away with the mass of captives on the northern road. At the first halting-place, by the hill of Ramah, he was released, with the free choice of a place of high favor in the court of Babylon, or of remaining in Palestine. “He refused,” says Josephus, with a glow of patriotic feeling which his

¹ Lam. i. 1, 12. The 1st, 2d, and 4th parts of the Lamentations are arranged in alphabetical rhythm, as represented in the two verses which I have quoted. The 3d chapter is also in alphabetical rhythm, but more

artificial, each stanza consisting of three lines, each line commencing with the same letter.

² Prefixed to Lam. i. 1, in the LXX.

³ Jer. xl. 1.

own political subserviency had not extinguished, "to go
 "to any other spot in the world, and he gladly clung to
 "the ruins of his country, and to the hope of living out
 "the rest of his life with its surviving relics."¹

The Holy City was gone; but the Holy Land still
 was left, free to be inhabited and cultivated by the
 population that had not been transplanted. Over this
 remnant of the Jewish commonwealth was placed the
 leader of that small and compact party, of which Jere-
 miah had been the animating spirit, and which now
 reaped the reward of their constant support of the

Chaldæan policy. Gedaliah was fitly chosen
 Gedaliah.

for the purpose. Inheriting the traditions of
 his grandfather Shaphan and of his father Ahikam, the
 steadfast and courageous friend of Jeremiah, he was a
 man of a generous, genial nature, such as might have
 rallied the better spirits of his countrymen round him,
 and taken the place of the fallen dynasty. The new
 capital was to be at Mizpeh. This "watch-tower" or
 "watching-place" was a union of sanctuary and fortress,
 on the ridge immediately overlooking Jerusalem from
 the northeast, which had been fortified by Asa² as an
 outpost of his capital against the northern kingdom, and
 where Sennacherib³ in earlier, and Titus in later days,
 caught their first view of the Holy City. It was this
 peculiarity of position which probably caused its selec-
 tion on the present occasion. From these heights Jere-
 miah must have descended to pour forth his Lamenta-
 tions, now that, for the first time, he had leisure to gaze
 on the full desolation of the city. To this point pil-
 grims flocked, both in that first freshness of grief, and
 afterwards in the days of the Maccabees, as the earliest

¹ Joseph. *Ant.* x. 9, § 1.

² 2 Kings xv. 22; Jer. xli. 9.

³ Isa. x. 32; Joseph. *B. J.* ii. 19,

§ 4; v. 2, § 3.

Jewish "wailing-place."¹ On the summit of the hill was Asa's fortress, with a deep well within a high enclosed court-yard, dug by him for the security of the garrison. Here Gedaliah took up his residence; "the throne," as it was called,² "of the governor on this side "the Euphrates." In the town, at the foot of the ridge,³ were lodged the Princesses of Judah, under the charge of a Chaldæan guard; perhaps with the intention that one of them, by marriage with Gedaliah, should carry on the royal line. Jeremiah and Baruch,⁴ who shared his master's good fortune, and even more than his master's ardor for submission to Babylon, acted as the guides and oracles of the whole community.

A momentary revival of hope shot through all the scattered remnants of Judah that were still within reach of this, as it seemed, beneficent and cheering arrangement. It was now more than a month since the sad July night when the city had fallen. From the other side of the Jordan, whither many had succeeded in escaping, they came streaming back, to store in, whilst the bright days of September lasted, such remains of the vintage and harvest and crop of olives, as had escaped the ravages of the Chaldæans. It was, in every sense, a Martinmas summer, could it but have endured. The first cloud soon arose, which was again to darken the whole horizon. Amongst the exiles beyond the Jordan was a band of well-known chiefs, who were attracted by Gedaliah's open-hearted invitation, and in whom it awakened a sentiment⁵ of loyalty long dead amongst the Israelite nobles. Of these the

¹ Jer. xli. 6, 7; 1 Macc. iii. 46.

³ Jer. xli. 10, 16.

² Neh. iii. 7. See, for many details of this story, Mr. Grove on ISHMAEL in the *Dict. of the Bible*.

⁴ Joseph. *Ant.* x. 9, § 1.

⁵ Ibid. x. 9, § 2 and 3.

most conspicuous were Ishmael, leagued closely with Baalis, King of Ammon, and John and Jonathan,¹ who were encamped in the plains of Moab. The sight of Gedaliah's position excited the ambition of Ishmael, who, relying on his own royal descent, and on the support of his friend the King of Ammon, determined to assassinate the good-natured governor, and for this purpose took the other chiefs into his confidence. They, with John at their head, warned Gedaliah of his danger, and John proposed to anticipate it by cutting off Ishmael himself. Gedaliah, with that noble frankness which had already endeared him to his intended subjects, repelled alike the suspicion and the offer.

A month elapsed, and the fatal day arrived which was to crush all these newly awakened hopes. Ishmael, with ten Ammonite nobles, as it would seem, again presented himself at the gates of the fortress. Jeremiah and John were absent. The jovial governor entertained the eleven guests at a copious feast, in which he indulged freely, and sank overpowered by wine into a deep slumber.² That moment Ishmael sprang from his seat and cut the throat of his unsuspecting host. The night had now closed in, and the eleven assassins stole out into the town, and murdered the Chaldæan guards and their Jewish attendants. The secret was so well kept that, on the next day, Ishmael was able to entrap within the court-yard a body of eighty pilgrims, whom he had seen coming along the great northern road from the old Samaritan kingdom. As soon as the gates of the court³ were closed behind them, like the Mamelukes in the citadel at Cairo, they were attacked, and their dead bodies thrown into Asa's deep well. Enriched

¹ Johanan.

² Ibid.

³ Joseph. *Ant.* x. 9, § 4.

with their gifts and with the hidden stores of ten whom he allowed to escape, he again descended on the town, and carried off the Princesses and their guards, in the hope of reaching the court of Baalis. At Gibeon or at Hebron, however, he was overtaken by Johanan, who had flown to the rescue, and succeeded in recovering the spoils and captives. But the deed was done. The one chance of continuing the Jewish settlement in Palestine was cut off. Jeremiah's authority for a few days seemed likely to withstand the panic. At the caravanserai of Chimham in Bethlehem¹ — the natural halting-place on the way to Egypt — they held a council of war; and there, against the Prophet's advice, finally determined to abandon their homes, and to make for the refuge, to which the worldly Israelite always had recourse, across the Egyptian border.

So disastrous did this step appear to the next and to all subsequent generations of Israel, that the day of Gedaliah's murder has been from that time forth and to this day observed as a national fast.² It seemed to be the final revocation of the advantages of the Exodus. By this breach in their local continuity, a chasm was made in the history which for good or evil was never filled up. The sense of its importance is manifested by the extreme detail — exceeding even that of the overthrow of the city itself — with which it is related; a striking instance of the sanguine tenacity with which a Prophet like Jeremiah could gather up every fragment and particle of life, and hope out of it to create and reconstruct the whole fabric of the Church and Commonwealth of Judah.

On Jeremiah himself the history closes, as he is

¹ Jer. xli. 17 (Heb.). See Lecture XXXVI.

² Zech. vii. 5; viii. 19.

torn from his native land, and finds himself on the Egyptian frontier at Tahpenes. Whether, according to the Christian tradition, he was stoned to death by his fellow-exiles in Egypt, or whether, according to the Jewish tradition, he made his escape to Babylon, the Hebrew Scriptures and Josephus are equally silent. But his legendary and traditional fame shows how large a space he occupied henceforward in the thoughts of his countrymen. More than any other of their heroes, he becomes, as has been truly said, the Patron Saint of Judea. He is the guardian of their sacred relics; carrying off with him the sacred fire from the altar; ascending the "mountain of Sinai" where Moses climbed up and saw the heritage of "God," and there "in a hollow cave he lays the tabernacle, the ark, and the altar of incense, and closes the door until the time that God shall gather His people again together, and receive them into mercy."¹ He appears in a vision to Judas Maccabæus, "with gray hairs, exceeding glorious, of a wonderful and excellent majesty, with a sword of gold in his right hand, — a gift from God" to the patriot warrior, "wherewith he shall wound the adversaries."² That peculiar intercessory mediation which even those who most feared and detested him believed that he possessed in life, he was thought to exercise with yet more potent efficacy after his death, — "a lover of the brethren, who prayeth much for the people and for the Holy City, Jeremiah the Prophet of God."³ As time rolled on, he became the chief representative of the whole Prophetic order. By some he was placed at

¹ 2 Macc. ii. 1-8.

² Ibid. xv. 13, 15, 16.

³ 2 Macc. xv. 14; comp. Jer. xxi.

2; xlii. 2.

the head of all the Prophets in the Jewish canon.¹ His spirit was believed to live on in Zechariah and in all the Prophetical writings which could not be traced back to their real author.² At the time of the Christian era, his return was daily expected. He was emphatically thought to be "the Prophet"³ — "the Prophet like unto Moses," who should close the whole dispensation.

So long a trail of posthumous fame following on so long a life of misunderstanding and persecution, and perhaps even a death of martyrdom, makes Jeremiah stand forth from the whole ancient dispensation as the most signal instance of the happy inconsistency with which churches and nations build the tombs of the Prophets whom their fathers have stoned. So magnificent a future, following on a life and death of such continual suffering, introduces a new idea into the Prophetic doctrine, which henceforth assumes proportions more and more definite. His contemporaries can have hardly failed to recognize the parallel which Saadia in the Jewish Church, and Grotius in the Christian Church, first drew out at length between the Servant of God, "despised and rejected of men — a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and Jeremiah, led "as a lamb to the slaughter," laden with sorrows to which no human sorrows were ever like — betrayed by his friends, "ever making intercession for the transgressors," "stricken for the transgression of his people." The martyrdom of Isaiah in the reign of Manasseh, and of Urijah in the reign of Jehoiakim, may have prepared the way for this change in the Prophetic visions of the Messiah. But as Jeremiah was

¹ Lightfoot on Matt. xxvii. 9.

³ Matt. xvi. 14.

² See Note A., p. 646.

“the Prophet” who, more than any other, seemed to live over again in the life of the Prophet of Nazareth, so the sorrows of Jeremiah, more than those of any other single Prophet, correspond to the desertion, the isolation, the tenderness, the death, and the final glorification of the Divine Sufferer.¹ His “Lamentations,” though not reckoned among the Prophetic books by the Jewish Church, though not invoked as predictions by the writers of the New Testament, yet by the sacredness of the grief which they depict, by the grandeur of the Prophetic character which they represent, are not unworthy of the solemn and melancholy use to which they have been consecrated by the Latin Church in its celebration of the Passion of Gethsemane and Calvary.

With Jeremiah the history of the Jewish monarchy, it might almost be said of the Jewish Church and

Ezekiel. Commonwealth in the fullest sense, is brought

to an end. But there still remain between the verge of this epoch, and the beginning of the next, one at least—it may be others also—in whom the mission of Jeremiah is continued for a while, both in letter and in spirit. On the banks of the Chebar² was a colony of Jewish exiles, who dated their migration year by year from the captivity of Jehoiachin, and who seem to have kept up a kind of organization like that which existed in their own

¹ Comp. Jer. xv. 15–18, with Isa. i. 5–8; Jer. xi. 19, with Isa. liii. 7; vii. 16, xi. 14, xiv. 11, with Isa. liii. 12; Lam. i. 12, iii. 1, 5, 15, 19, with Isa. liii. 3, 4. See the whole parallel worked out by Bunsen (*Gott in der Geschichte*, 204–207).

² Professor Rawlinson would trans-

fer the “Chebar” to one of the branches of the Euphrates in the neighborhood of Babylon. Layard (*Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 283) adheres to the usual identification (borne out by the use of the word “river”) with the Khabour.

country, consisting of elders or chiefs who acted as the representatives of the rest. Amongst these was conspicuous Ezekiel the son of Buzi. Like Jeremiah, he was a Priest as well as a Prophet, but with the Priestly element more largely developed; and also one step farther removed from the ancient Prophets, inasmuch as he is the first in whom the author and the writer entirely preponderate over the seer, the poet, and the statesman.¹ The scroll and the inkhorn, which we see only from time to time in Jeremiah, is never absent from Ezekiel. The speeches or odes of the earlier Prophets have been preserved, according to the original character of their utterance, in scattered fragments; Ezekiel's first constitute a book, arranged in regular chronological order from beginning to end. The atmosphere which he breathes, the visions by which he is called to his office, are alike strange to the older period; no longer Hebrew, but Asiatic; no longer the single, simple figure of cloud, or flame, or majestic human form, which had been the means of conveying the truth of the Divine Presence to Moses or Isaiah, but a vast complexity, "wheel within wheel,"² as if corresponding to the new order of a larger, wider, deeper Providence now opening before him. The imagery³ that he sees is that which no one could have used unless he had wandered through the vast halls of Assyrian Palaces, and there gazed on all that Assyrian monuments have disclosed to us of human dignity and brute strength combined,—the eagle-winged lion, human-headed bull.⁴ These complicated forms supplied the

¹ See Ewald, *Propheten*, ii. 208.

³ Ezek. i. 6–11.

² Ezek. i. 16–22.

⁴ Compare Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, 448, 464.

vehicle of the sublime truths that dawned upon him from amidst the mystic wheels, the sapphire throne, the amber fire, and the rainbow brightness. It is the last glimpse of those gigantic emblems, which vanished in the Prophet's lifetime, only to reappear in our own age, from the ruins of the long-lost Nineveh.

Later traditions fondly identified him with his Mesopotamian home. In them he was represented as foretelling the flood of the river by which they were encamped; and as judging the tribes of Gad and Dan. He was buried in state near Babylon, in a sepulchre which has for centuries been visited by Jewish pilgrims, who believe that it was erected by Jehoiachin, and that the lamp which still burns upon it was lighted by Ezekiel himself.¹ But, according to the Prophet's own record of his life, his heart was not in the land of his exile, but "in the land of his "nativity." His own home,² where he dwelt with his wife, and guided the counsels of the small community of the Chebar, faded from his eyes. Across the rich garden of that fertile region, across the vast Euphrates, across the intervening desert, his spirit still yearned towards Jerusalem, still lived in the Temple courts, where once he had ministered. Though an exile he was still one with his countrymen; and in the sense of that union, and in the strength of a mightier power than his own, the bounds of space and time were overleaped, and during the seven years that elapsed before the city was overthrown, he lived absorbed in the Prophetic sight of the things that were to be, and in the Prophetic hearing of the words that were to be spoken, in this last crisis of his country's fate.

¹ *Chron. Pasch.* 158, 159; Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, 500. ² *Ezek.* viii. 1; xxiv. 16.

In the presence of the impending catastrophe, he was amidst his fellow-exiles, exactly as Jeremiah amidst his fellow-citizens. An unshak-
His prophe-
cies of Jeru-
salem.
 able courage and confidence was needed to bear up against the words and looks of fury with which each was assailed. Each of the two prophets, without communicating with the other, is the echo of the other's sorrow.¹ Deep answers to deep across the Assyrian desert; the depth of woe in him who, from the walls of Zion, saw the storm approaching, is equalled, if not surpassed, by the depth of woe in him who lived, as it were, in the skirts of the storm itself — “the whirlwind, the great cloud, the fire unfolding itself from the north;”² gathering round the whole horizon before it reached the frontiers of Palestine. Not only in his words, but in his acts, he was to be a perpetual witness of the coming desolation. Now he might be seen portraying on a tile all the details of the siege of the city;³ then again he would lie stretched out motionless, for more than a year,⁴ like one crushed to the ground under the burden of his people's sins. At other times, he was to be seen stamping with his feet, and clasping his hands, in the agony of grief, or stirring a huge caldron,⁵ as if of the scum of his country's misery. Then again he would fix their attention by acts most abhorrent to his nature and his priestly calling. He cut off, lock by lock, the long tresses of his hair and beard,⁶ the peculiar marks of his sacerdotal office, and one by one threw them into the fire. He ate the filthy food,⁷ which belonged only to the worst

¹ “Velut si duo cantores alter ad alterius vocem se comparent” (Calvin).

² Ezek. i. 4; comp. Jer. xxiii. 19; xlviii. 2.

³ Ezek. iv. 1.

⁴ Ibid. iv. 5.

⁵ Ibid. xxiv. 3–11.

⁶ Ibid. v. 1.

⁷ Ibid. iv. 12.

extremity of famine. And last of all, when the fatal day arrived, when the armies of Nebuchadnezzar had gathered round the walls of Jerusalem, the last and most awful sign¹ was given to show how great and how irresistible was the calamity. On the evening of that day his wife died. The desire of his eyes was taken from him by a sudden stroke. And yet when the sun rose, and as the hours of the day passed on, he appeared in public with none of the frantic tokens of Oriental grief. He raised no piercing cry for the dead; he shed not a tear; the turban, which should have been dashed in anguish on the ground, was on his head; the feet that should have been bare were sandalled as usual. He did in all things as he would have done had no calamity overtaken him — himself the living sign and personification of a grief too deep for tears, too terrible for any funereal dirge either to arrest or to express. Well might the roll which was placed in his hand seem to be “written within and without with lamentations, and mourning, and woe.”²

But as in the case of Jeremiah, so in the case of Ezekiel, there was the sweetness as of honey mingled with the bitterness of his grief.³ What had appeared in germ in the writings of Jeremiah was repeated in a fuller shape by Ezekiel. He is the disciple, such as has often been seen both in philosophy and theology, carrying out into their most startling consequences the principles barely disclosed by the teacher. He as well as Jeremiah is a Prophet especially of the Second Law — of the law written in the heart.⁴ He too reviews the history of the

His moral
and spirit-
ual doc-
trine.

¹ Ezek. xxiv. 16–27.

² Ibid. ii. 10.

³ Ibid. iii. 3

⁴ Ezek. xi. 19; xviii. 31; comp. Jer. xxxi. 33.

Chosen People, and has the courage to treat them like any other people;¹ to point out the natural and ethnological origin² of the Holy City, — Amorite and Hittite by birth, — the failure even of the ancient rite of circumcision³ as a safeguard for the nations which had adopted it. He too is the witness of the dispensation of the Spirit; he sets forth, in language which belongs rather to the coming than the departing epoch, the magic transformation of himself, of his country, of its dead institutions,⁴ by the “Spirit” which breathes through all his visions; the Breath of Life which was in the utmost complexity⁵ of that Divine mechanism, in the utmost variety of those strange shapes, through which he was called to his mission. But the form in which this doctrine acquires in his hands the newest development is that of the responsibility of the individual soul separate from the collective nation, separate from the good or ill deserts of ancestry. The note which is struck⁶ for a moment by Jeremiah is taken up by Ezekiel with a force and energy which makes his announcement of it ring again from end to end of his writings. It is to be found in those familiar words which the Church of England has placed at the head of its ritual: “When the wicked man turneth away from “his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and “right, he shall save his soul alive.” Other Prophets have more of poetical beauty, a deeper sense of divine things, a tenderer feeling of the mercies of God for His people; none teach so simply, and with a sim-

¹ Ezek. xx. 5-44; comp. Jer. vii. 21-25.

² Ibid. xvi. 3.

³ Ibid. xxxii. 29, 32; comp. Jer. ix. 25, 26.

⁴ Ezek. xxxvi. 2; comp. Jer. xxxi. 3.

⁵ Ibid. i. 20, 21, 26, 27, 28.

⁶ Ibid. xviii. 1; comp. Jer. xxxi. 29, 30.

plicity the more remarkable from the elaborate imagery out of which it emerges, this great moral lesson, to us the first of all lessons.¹ In the midst of this national revolution, when the day of mercy is past, and when no image is too loathsome to describe the iniquities of Israel, the Prophet is not tempted to demand the destruction of the righteous with the wicked, nor the salvation of the wicked for the sake of the righteous. He contemplates the extremest case of the venerable patriarchs of former ages, or perhaps of his own, — Noah, Daniel, and Job,² — and yet feels that even they could save neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness. He blames equally those false teachers who make the heart of the wicked glad whom the Lord hath not made glad, and those who make the heart of the righteous sad whom the Lord hath not made sad.³ “The doctrine of substitution,” in any form, is unknown in the teaching of Ezekiel. The old Mosaic precept of the visitation of the sins of the fathers upon the children, had become popularized into the proverb afloat both in Jerusalem and in Chaldæa, that “the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.” But in spite of its own authority and its acceptance by his countrymen, and although containing a partial truth, it is put to flight before Ezekiel’s announcement of the still loftier principle, “All souls are God’s; as the “soul of the father, so is the soul of the son. The “soul that sinneth, it shall die. He that hath with- “drawn his hand from iniquity . . . he is just; he “shall surely live.”⁴

¹ Professor Jowett on the Epistles
of St. Paul, ii. 334.

³ Ezek. xiii. 22.

⁴ Ibid. xviii. 4, 8, 9

² Ezek. xiv. 14, 20.

In words like these, both before and after the fall of his country, the mighty soul of the Priestly Prophet poured itself out. How startling a doctrine to his own generation is evident from the iron firmness which was needed to proclaim it; a forehead of adamant, harder than flint,¹ a heart never dismayed. How startling to the Jewish Church of after times we learn from the narrow escape which this wonderful book sustained, on this very account, of exclusion from the sacred canon altogether. The Masters of the Synagogue hesitated long before they could receive into the sacred writings a Prophet who seemed boldly to contradict the very Pentateuch² itself; and even when they received it, attempted, it is said, to rewrite his burning words, in order to bring them into accordance with the popular theology of their day. It is hardly possible to overrate the vast importance of this, the last expiring cry of the Jewish monarchy, which, both from its indispensable connection with the very foundation of Christian doctrine, and from the supernatural energy of its inspiration, may be truly called the Gospel according to Ezekiel. Nor is its universal significance impaired, because it is, we may say, wrung out of him by the cruel necessities of the age, at once their consolation and their justification. In ordinary times, the mutual dependence of man on man, the control of circumstances, the hereditary contagion of sin and misery, fall in with the older view which Ezekiel combats. But it is the special use of such critical calamities as that of the fall of Jerusalem, that they reveal to us in a higher and still more important sense the absolute independence of man from man; the truth that we are not

¹ Ezek. ii. 6; iii. 8.

² See Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, ii. 49.

merely parts of a long chain of circumstances which cannot be broken, but that we must each one live for himself and die for himself. It is, in fact, the doctrine bound up in the very idea of Ezekiel's mission. As in his own person he had exhibited the necessity of the judgment that was to fall on the nation at large, so he set forth in his own person the inalienable freedom of each individual conscience and will. In the pressure of famine and captivity without, and of corruption and idolatry within, the mere fact of such a Prophet existing at all was a proof that the human mind and spirit was not entirely crushed. "Liberavi animam meam" is but the modern version of the still sublimer words,¹ — "Thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear; and they shall know that there hath been a prophet among them."

On this narrow but solid plank of the doctrine of human responsibility, Ezekiel crossed the chasm which divided the two parts of his eventful life. It is almost the last doctrine which we hear announced before his country fell. It is the first that meets us as he recovers from the shock after all is over.²

In his prophecies of his own country, a long silence succeeds to his eager remonstrances and piercing lamentations. The interval is filled by strains of sorrow and exultation over the fall of the nations. The overthrow of the Jewish monarchy coincides with the overthrow of those primeval states which had hitherto occupied the attention of mankind. During the preceding century, the Jewish Prophets had prepared the way for the final catastrophe of the oldest historic world, much as the Christian Fathers had

The dirge
over the
nations.

¹ Ezek. ii. 5-8.

² Ezek. xviii. 1-32; xxxiii. 11-20.

heralded the downfall of the second fabric of civilization in the Greco-Roman world. "The seers of Judah watched the progress of the invader, and uttered their sublime funereal anthems over the greatness of each independent tribe or monarchy, as it was swallowed up first in the empire of Assyria and then of Chaldæa. They were like the tragic chorus of the awful drama which was unfolding itself to the Eastern world."¹ This dirge, it may be said, reached its highest pitch in the Prophecies of Ezekiel. In the twilight interval dividing the hopeless gloom of the Captivity from the first dawn of the Restoration, is pronounced the doom of the several tribes of Western Asia by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar — of Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Damascus.² It may be truly said that Fall of the tribes of Syria. they then passed away and were no more seen amongst the nations of the earth. Edom lingers the longest, but even Edom leaves his original seat and becomes a colony rather than a kingdom. The others disappear forever.

Tyre also, the most imperial city of Syria, stretching back into times before the first Israelite set foot west of the Jordan, now vanishes from the Fall of Syria. scene of history. The mere city, indeed, lasted not only through the classical times, but far into the middle ages, and as a small town exists even at the present day; but as a state and as an empire it fell under the pressure of the Babylonian conquest. For the last time, through the piercing eyes of Ezekiel, we see the Queen of ancient commerce, in all her glory, under the figure of one of her own stately vessels, sailing proudly over her subject seas, with the fine linen of Egypt

¹ Milman's *History of the Jews*, i. 369.

² Ezek. xxv. 1-17; comp. Jer. xlviii.—xlix.

for her white sails, with the purple from the isles of Greece for the drapery of her seats, with merchant princes for her pilots and her mariners.¹ We see her suddenly overtaken by the storm from the East, and foundering in her final shipwreck, amidst a wail of despair and anguish from all the coasts of the Mediterranean. In that bitter wail over the fall of so much splendor even in a rival heathen state, the Prophet joins, with a grief second only to that which he and Jeremiah had poured forth on the overthrow of their own country.²

But his view extended farther still as the grave of the nations yawned and widened before his eyes. Into that deep abyss the gigantic form of the Assyrian Empire had fallen with a sudden crash, like that of an aged cedar of Lebanon, the sound of which made the nations to shake.³ Into that grave many a wild horde of Northern Asia had descended or was descending under the sword of successive conquerors.⁴ And now into that same dark polluted place was to descend a power loftier and more venerable than any of them. Egypt, the most civilized of the kingdoms,⁵ so long marked off by her ancient ceremonial from the surrounding tribes, sharing like Tyre and Israel in the once proud distinction of circumcision, so careful in her punctilious cleanliness and her august burials, was to be dragged forth like the dying crocodile,⁶ the huge monster of her own sacred river; to be cast out with the unclean bloodstained corpses of the battle-field; to be hurled, not into her

¹ Ezek. xxvii. 1-24. See Kenrick's *Phœnicia*, 196.

² Ezek. xxvii. 26-36.

³ Ibid. xxxi. 3-17; xxxii. 22, 23.

⁴ Ibid. xxxii. 24-28.

⁵ Ezek. xxxii. 18-21, 31, 32. See the germ of this in Jer. xliii. 11, 12; xli. 13-24.

⁶ Ezek. xxxii. 2-6 (Heb.).

own deep repose in painted sepulchre or massive pyramid, but into the unhallowed promiscuous pit, side by side with the uncircumcised and uncivilized races of the decaying and dishonored past. Egypt, as a country, as a kingdom, as a church, has never failed; but as the oracular empire of the hoary ages of the ancestors of the human race, it died then to revive no more.

Over against this sepulchre of the nations sate the Prophet uttering his wild lamentations; a strain, if at times mingled with "the old hatred"¹ of the neighbor tribes, yet for those older, statelier empires, rather of sorrow than of vengeance. One final catastrophe was yet to come, before the funereal procession of kingdoms was closed. But the fall of Babylon was not for Ezekiel to see, or even to predict. It belongs to the opening scenes of that new epoch, to which, across the gulf that parts the old from the new, we pass with him as our only guide.

So marked is the separation, so completely had he lived a life in those few years and weeks of suspense and of grief, that, in the Jewish traditions, his Prophetical writings were regarded as two separate works.² It was on a day much to be remembered by the exiles on the Chebar, "in the twelfth³ year of their captivity, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month," that an unusual movement stole over the Prophet's soul. For a whole year, ever since the commencement of the investment of the city, coinciding with the fatal blow which blasted his own domestic life, he had, as far as his countrymen were con-

His revival.

¹ Ezek. xxv. 15.

² Joseph. *Ant.* x. 5, § 1.

³ Ezek. xxxiii. 21. Some MSS. read "eleventh year." But this is hardly needed. The twelfth year of

Jehoiachin's captivity might still be reckoned as the "eleventh" of Zedekiah's reign. In this case the result would be the same.

cerned, remained speechless. On the sunset which, according to the Jewish reckoning, began that day, he suddenly found words again ; “ his mouth was open and “ he was no more dumb ; ” the presentiment grew stronger ; and at last, at dawn, a fugitive from Jerusalem broke into his presence with the tidings : “ The city is “ smitten.” The worst was now realized ; the Holy City was captured ; the kingdom of David was no more. It might, perhaps, have been thought that, if possible, a deeper note of misery would have been awakened in Ezekiel’s heart. But it is not so. From that moment Ezekiel’s prospect brightens. It was not merely, as in the instance of David’s mourning for his child, that the natural course of grief had spent itself, and that certainty was better than suspense. It was that the view itself changed. Once again the hand of the Lord was upon him and set him down in the midst of the wide open plain of Mesopotamia. In that desert tract was the sight so familiar to passers through the wilderness, — bones and skeletons of man and beast, dry and bleaching on the yellow sands, the remnants of some vast caravan leaving behind it its fifties and its hundreds to perish of hunger or weariness ; or the burial-place of some wild tribe or some mighty host of ancient days, whose remains, long covered by the dust, some passing whirlwind had revealed to view. Round these dry and lifeless relics, the Prophet was in his vision bid to walk to and fro, and to utter the loud chant of his Prophetic utterances. He prophesied, and as his voice sounded through the stillness of the desert air, there was an answering peal as of thunder, and the hard dry earth shook under his feet, and the bones came together, and the sinews and the flesh once mere crept over them, and they lay still dead and lifeless, but like the corpses of a

vast multitude from whom breath has just departed. Again he raised his wild chant, and the wind¹ on which he himself had been borne was swelled as by a rushing blast from the four corners of the wilderness, and the corpses lived and stood on their feet, and the lonely desert was peopled with an exceeding great army. Even without the Divine interpretation which followed, the meaning of the vision was clear. Those bones in the desert were, indeed, an apt emblem of the race of Israel, scattered, divided each from each, their "bones dried," "their hope lost."² That revival — the pledge and likeness of all revivals for all future ages — was a fit likeness of that to which they were now to look forward, when the grave of their captivity would be opened, when the skeleton of Judaism would come out from its tomb, and be inspired with the invigorating blast of the Divine Spirit, and be clothed with fresh and living beauty. Yet more encouraging is the closing vision of the Prophet's life. Again, as in his earlier days, but now with a wholly different purpose, the same Divine hand seizes him, and transports him to his native country. In the visions of God he stands on the summit of a high mountain, and there is revealed to him the mysterious plan of a city and Temple, exactly corresponding to that which he had known in his youth, even down to minute details, but on a gigantic scale. And from under the Temple porch he sees the perennial spring which lay hid within the rocky vault burst forth into a full and overflowing stream,³ which pours down the terraces towards the Eastern gate. The

¹ Ezek. xxxvii. 1, 5, 8, 9, 10. The same Hebrew word is in the A. V. rendered by "spirit," "wind," and "breath."

² Ezek. xxxvii. 11.

³ The germ of this thought had already appeared in Zech. xiii. 1; xiv. 8.

dry bed of the Kedron is filled with a mighty torrent, which rises higher and higher till it becomes a vast river, and the rugged and sterile rocks which line its course break out into verdure, and through the two deep defiles the stream divides and forces its way into the desert plain of the Jordan, and into the lifeless waters of the Salt Sea, and the Sea of Death begins to teem with living creatures and with innumerable fish, like the Sea of Tiberias or the Mediterranean, and the fishermen stand all along its banks to watch the transformation,¹ and, according to the sight so common in Eastern countries, the life-giving water is everywhere followed by the growth of luxuriant vegetation, — “trees for food, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed.”²

How the outward form of that vision was left to pass away, how its inward spirit was fulfilled beyond all that Ezekiel could have dreamed, is the story reserved for the next epoch of the Jewish history, but is yet, not dimly, foreshadowed even in Ezekiel's own lifetime.

One other voice begins to make itself heard as Ezekiel's words die a way — a “voice”³ rather than a living man — the last swanlike song of the Prophets of the monarchy — a voice sounding in the barren wilderness between the Captivity and the Return, between Babylon and Jerusalem. It is that wonderful strain⁴ which, by likeness of thought and language seems a continuation of the great Isaiah, by its connection with the sufferings and the fall of the nation links itself to the fortunes⁵ of Jeremiah or of Baruch, and by its mysteri-

¹ Ezek. xlvii. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 (Heb.).

² Ezek. xlvii. 12.

³ Isa. xl. 3, 6.

⁴ Ibid. xl. — lxvi.

⁵ Compare Ezra i. 1; Baruch iii.

1 — v. 9. Grotius on Isa. liii. See also Bunsen's argument connecting this portion of Isaiah with Baruch (*Gott in der Geschichte*, 207–221).

ous origin and independent character well claims the title of the "Great Unnamed."¹

Those six and twenty chapters of the Book of Isaiah — the most deeply inspired, the most truly Evangelical of any portion of the Prophetical writings, whatever be their date, and whoever their author — take their stand on the times of the Captivity, and from thence look forward from the summit of the last ridge of the Jewish history into the remotest future, unbroken now by any intervening barrier.

The second
portion of
Isaiah.

Both worlds at once they view,
Who stand upon the threshold of the new.

The "warfare of Jerusalem is already accomplished."² "She has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." "The princes³ of the sanctuary are profaned." "The holy land is waste and desolate." "Zion is forsaken and forgotten."⁴ "The holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a desolation, Jerusalem is a desolation." "The holy and beautiful house wherein their fathers had worshipped is burned up with fire, and all their pleasant things are laid waste."⁵ This is the retrospect to which the Prophet looks back. The times not only of Manasseh but of Jehoiachin and Zedekiah are far behind him. The exiles to whom he appeals are already planted in Babylon; to them, and not to any former generation of Israelites, is the consolation addressed, which streams in one continuous flow, uninterrupted by the multiplied incidents which, on the right

¹ So Ewald, *Propheten* (ii. pp. 403–410); *Geschichte* (iv. pp. 55–58),

"Der grosse Ungenannte."

² Isa. xl. 2.

³ Ibid. xliii. 28.

⁴ Isa. xlv. 26, 28; li. 3; lxii. 4; xlix. 14, 19, 21.

⁵ Ibid. lxiv. 10, 11; lii. 9. Comp. Ibid. 24, lii. 2.

hand and the left, had broken the course of the earlier Prophetic appeals. From this bondage of the Captivity a new Exodus is to begin for the Chosen People—a new return through the wilderness. But this revival of Isaiah's spirit, this new epoch for Israel, is to coincide with a new epoch in the history of the world. The primeval period of mankind is drawing to its close; the ancient gigantic monarchies and religions, known to us only through their mighty conquerors, or their vast monuments, are, as we have seen, passing away; the great catastrophe which is to wind up their long career, the fall of Babylon, is already imminent.

Cyrus. And in the place of this giant age is to begin
 B. C. 560. that second period of history, which we term classical. Its commencement may be fixed almost to a year. It is with the clearest right that the first date of the "Fasti Hellenici," the Grecian annals of our English chronologer, is fixed in the year 560. It is the date of the accession of the two famous potentates in Greece and amongst the Grecian colonists, from whose reigns commences our distinct knowledge of Grecian life and literature,—Pisistratus at Athens, Croesus at Sardis. It is the date which coincides with the appearance of the first authentic characters of Roman history in the reign of the Tarquins. From this time forward that Western world of Greece and Rome rises more and more steadily above the horizon, till it occupies the whole view. It was a true insight into the inmost heart of this vast movement, which caused the Prophet to see in it not merely the blessing of his own people, but the union of the distant isles¹ of the Western Sea with the religion hitherto confined to the uplands of Asia. And, further, in the East itself, the time was come, when

¹ Isa. xlv. 1; lx. 9.

from beyond the northern mountains the power was to descend which should accomplish this vast catastrophe. To that power—not merely to the quarter of the world, or to the nation, or to the hour, but to the man—did the Prophetic indications of this period point, with a significance worthy of the grandeur of the occasion. One such had arisen,—in that same great year, the year 560, just twenty years after the Jewish exile had begun,—Koresh or Cyrus, the Persian. On him the expectation of the nations was fixed. Concerning him the question rose whether he would, like the chiefs and princes of former times, be a mere transient conqueror? or would he indeed be the deliverer who should inaugurate the fall of the old and the rise of the new world?

Out of the darkness of suspense came the welcome answer which marked him out as the One Anointed Hero¹—alike of the Chosen People and of all the nations of the then known world. Amply was that Prophetic intimation justified. To us, looking back at the crisis from a distance which enables us to see the whole extent of the new era which he was to open, the fitness of Cyrus for the place which the Prophet assigns to him is full of meaning. The history of the civilized world was entering on an epoch, when the Semitic races were to make way for the Indo-Germanic or Aryan nations, which were thenceforth to sway the fortunes of mankind. With those nations Cyrus, first of Asiatic potentates, was to be brought into close relation. With Greece henceforward the destinies of the Persian monarchy would be inseparably united. Nay, of all the nations of Central Asia, Persia alone was of the same stock as the Greco-Roman and Germanic world. Cyrus,

¹ Isa. xlv. 1.

first of the great men whom Scripture records, spoke the tongue not of Palestine or Assyria, but of the races of the West. First, too, of the ancient conquerors, Cyrus is known to us as other than a mere despot and destroyer. It can hardly be without ground that he who, by the Hebrew Prophet, was hailed not merely as a liberator and benefactor of Israel, but as an inaugurator of a reign of Righteousness and Truth, should, in Grecian literature,¹ alone of the barbarian kings, have been represented as the type of a just and gentle Prince. In contact also with Cyrus the Israelite found, for the first time in the heathen world, not a temptation to idolatry, but a protection of that belief in the Unity of God, which now as never before began to take hold of the national mind. Of all the Gentile forms of faith the religion of the Persians was the most simple and the most spiritual. Their abhorrence of idols² was pushed almost to fanaticism. In Egypt, the scattered statues and broken temples still bear witness to the furious zeal of Cambyses. In Greece, the approach of Xerxes to Delphi was the invasion not merely of a hostile army, but of a band of terrible iconoclasts. And so the advent of Cyrus was now hailed by the Prophet as the doom of the gigantic idols of Babylon which should totter³ and fall before his approach: the bitter scorn with which the old Polytheism was assailed by the Israelite captives was strengthened by the corresponding scoffs which it awakened in the Persian conquerors.

Such was the outward framework of the prospect

¹ Xenophon's *Cyropædia*.

² "They have no images of the gods, no temples, no altars, and consider the use of them a sign of folly."

Herodotus, i. 131. Comp. Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, vol. i. Essay 5.

³ Isa. xlv. 9-20; xlv. 5, 6, 7; xlv. 1, 2; xlvii. 1, 4; Baruch vi. 4-73; Bel and the Dragon, 19-27.

which opened before the Prophet's mind. The prospect itself was vaster and wider still. It is the same as that of Ezekiel, but cleared almost entirely¹ from that material imagery of priestly ritual and stately sanctuary, of fierce war and sweeping conquest, with which Ezekiel's visions were so deeply tinged. It expands into the pure and bright anticipations of a reign of Love and Justice, which needs hardly any outward figure to represent it.² In the past, not the regal magnificence of David and Solomon, but the patriarchal simplicity of Abraham, and the grand Prophetic march of Moses,³ furnish the grounds of hope. In the foreground of the future stands not the Ruler, or Conqueror, but the "*Servant*" of God, gentle, purified, suffering — whether it be Cyrus whom He had anointed; or Jacob whom He had chosen,⁴ His people with whom after all their affliction He was well pleased; or Jeremiah and the Prophetic order, the victim of their country's sins, led as a lamb to the slaughter;⁵ or One,⁶ more sorrowful, more triumphant, more human, more divine, than any of these, the last and true fulfilment of the most spiritual hopes and the highest aspirations of the Chosen People. In the remoter horizon is the vision of a gradual amelioration of the whole human race,⁷ to be accomplished not solely or chiefly by the seed of Israel, but by those outlying nations which were but just beginning to take their place in the world's history. In the strains of triumph which welcome the influx of these Gentile strangers, we recognize the prelude of the

¹ The exceptions are Isa. lxiii. 1–6; lxvi. 20–23.

² Isa. lvii. 13–21; lx. 17; lxi. 11.

³ Ibid. xli. 8; li. 2; lxiii. 11–14.

⁴ Ibid. xlv. 1, 28; xlv. 1; xlix. 3.

⁵ Isa. lii. 13; liii. 7. Comp. Jer. xi. 19.

⁶ Isa. liii. 1–12; Matt. viii. 17; xii. 18; Luke iv. 18; Acts viii. 32.

⁷ Isa. xlix. 1, 6, 12; l. 22, 23; lx. 1–22; lxi. 1–11.

part which in the coming fortunes of the Jewish Church is to be played not only by Cyrus, and, if so be, Zoroaster, but by Socrates and Plato, by Alexander and by Cæsar. It has been truly observed that the new elements which Christendom received from the Greek, the Roman, and the Teutonic world were almost as important as those which it received from the Jewish race. Its European, as distinguished from its Asiatic features, form one of the main characteristics which raise it both above Judaism and Mahometanism. To have recognized and anticipated this truth is the rare privilege of the Evangelical Prophet.

This is the dawn of the new epoch of Jewish and of universal history; full of misgivings and doubts, such as have beset every great revolution in human opinions and institutions. But in the chill of that new dawn, amidst the perplexities of that untried situation, amidst the ruins of those ancient empires, in the eager expectation of those unknown changes—the first words which break the silence, and of which the strains echo through the whole of the next period of the history, and through its endless consequences, are those of the mighty and mysterious Teacher, Prophet and Psalmist both in one;¹ the key-note not only of the revived and transformed Israel, but of the rising world of Asia and Europe, and of the Christendom of a still remoter future:—

Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people.

The comfort is of that enduring kind, which is solid now as when it was first uttered. It is the expectation of constant, though unequal, progress towards perfection; the disappearance of present difficulties before the in-

¹ Isa. xl. 1, 2, 4, 31.

creasing light and energy of the fresh generations of mankind ; the confidence that this continued advance is the cause of God Himself.

The voice of one that crieth in the wilderness,
Prepare ye the way of the Lord ;
Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. . . .
Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain shall
be made low ;
And the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough
places plain ; . . .
They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength ;
They shall mount up with wings as eagles ;
They shall run and not be weary ;
They shall walk and not faint.

NOTE A.

ON ISAIAH XL.—LXVI.

I SUBJOIN very briefly the facts relating to the second portion of Isaiah, xl.—lxvi., which compel us to consider it apart from the earlier portion (i.—xxxv.).

1. Between these two portions a strong line of demarcation is drawn by the interposition of the historical chapters, xxxvi.—xxxix. Whatever be the date of the respective parts, there can be no doubt that they are entirely distinct compositions.

2. The style of the concluding portion, though in many respects similar to the earlier chapters, differs essentially in its ease and continuous flow.

3. The differences of language are variously stated by Orientalists. But by the most distinguished — such as Ewald and Gesenius — they are stated to be distinctly marked.

4. The subjects of thought which are prominent in the concluding division are new, if not in themselves, yet in the proportions which they occupy ; such as the constant recurrence of “the Servant of God,” and the glories of the enlarged Church of the future Jerusalem.

5. All the allusions presuppose that Jerusalem (not is to be, but) has been already destroyed ; that the persons to be consoled (not will be, but) are already in exile (see the passages cited in Lecture XL. p. 637) ; that Babylon (not will be, but) is in the height of her power ; and that Cyrus and his conquests are (not merely foreseen in some distant future, but) already well known.

6. Except in lvi. 9—lvii. 12 (which has all the appearance of an earlier fragment incorporated), there is no allusion to the peculiar customs of Palestine under the monarchy ; and no references to the Assyrian invasion or the other historical circumstances, which mark the reigns of Hezekiah and of Manasseh.

7. A few parallels may be adduced from Micah's allusions to the Captivity ; but they differ in this material point, that Micah (iv. 10) speaks of it as still to come, Isaiah (xl. 2, xlvii. 1, xlviii. 14, 20) as already far advanced.

8. The continuous and elaborate style confirms the supposition that the book belongs to the period when, as we see in Ezekiel, the speaker and the actor were exchanged for the writer. (See Lecture XL.)

9. The order of the Books in the Babylonian Talmud confirms the supposition that there were believed to be in the Book of Isaiah portions of a date subsequent to Jeremiah and Ezekiel : — 1. Jeremiah ; 2. Ezekiel ; 3. *Isaiah* ; 4. The Twelve Minor Prophets.

10. In Ezra i. 1 it is not Isaiah, but Jeremiah, who is quoted as having foretold the deliverance by Cyrus ; and this is the more remarkable when contrasted with the later version of the same events in Josephus (*Ant.* xi. 1, § 2), who expressly cites Isaiah as the author of the predictions which induced the act of Cyrus.

11. The amalgamation of the two Prophets would be sufficiently explained, either by the well-known practice of Eastern scribes, of combining together two or more works, following each other in the same collection, or by the undoubted occasional likeness of style between the first and second portions.

12. Similar instances of agglomerating several works under the same name are to be found, probably in the Prophecies of Zechariah, certainly in the Psalter of David, and in the Twelve Minor Prophets (called in the Babylonian Talmud by the single name of "the Fourth Later Prophet").

13. In Mark i. 2, 3, according to the best MSS., the Prophecies not only of Isa. xl. 3, but of Mal. iii. 1, are included under the name of "Isaiah the Prophet," — an exact parallel to the amalgamation in question.

It is true that these peculiarities may be explained by the hypothesis of an ecstatic transportation of the earlier Prophet out of his own time into the middle of the next century. But such a hypothesis is without any other example in the Scriptures. Even granting the interpretation of the Book of Daniel and of

the Apocalypse which makes those two books predict minutely historical events of the remotest future, yet in each case the position in which the Prophet is placed is that of his own time, — Daniel at Babylon, St. John at Patmos; whereas the Isaiah of the second portion (xl.—lxvi.) is altogether removed from the reign of Hezekiah or Manasseh, and the practical appeals of his prophetic office would be as unmeaning, if addressed to the Jews of that period, as they are full of instruction, when considered as addressed to the Jews of the period of the Captivity. The second portion of the Prophecies, as having been for so many ages incorporated with the first, and as partaking so largely of the style and spirit of Isaiah, can still be called by his name.¹ But the essential connection of these Prophecies with the period of the Captivity is a fact which must equally remain, whatever opinion we form of their date or their author.

NOTE B.

ON THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE question raised in the preceding Note is connected with one of a more general character; namely, the apportionment of the dates and authorships of many of the Sacred Books.

One of the most striking differences between the existing histories of the Jewish people and those of Greece and Rome is their anonymous character. Whereas the Classical historians, almost without exception, claim their books for themselves, the Sacred historians, almost without exception, leave their names undisclosed. For a long time this was unperceived, owing to the groundless assumption that the subject of a book must necessarily be the author of it; and that therefore Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and Job must have written the books which bear their names, even although their own deaths are recorded therein. This mode of argument was confined to Sacred criticism. It was never imagined, in classical literature, that the

¹ As in Joseph. *Ant.* xi. 1, 2; Eccclus. xlviii. 24; Matt. iii. 3; Mark i. 2, 3; Luke iv. 17; Rom. x. 16, 30.

"Odyssey" was written by Ulysses, or the "Æneid" by Æneas. It is now generally abandoned in regard to Sacred literature also, and the singular self-abnegation of the Sacred historians has proportionally been brought into light.

A more delicate question is opened by the discovery, not only that many of the Sacred books have no known author, but that in single books different elements from various sources are combined. This detection of the composite nature of the Hebrew writings, though sometimes pushed to excess by the German critics, is nevertheless one of the most interesting and certain results of their labors. The telescope of scholarship has resolved what before were dim nebulous clusters into their separate, distinct stars; and there are very few of the books of the Old Testament which have not received additional light from this restorative process. Almost all the historical writings partake of this complex character. The Pentateuch in the earlier period, the Books of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra in the latter period, are now universally acknowledged, in their present state, to be the work of several hands.

When, from these great historical compilations, we pass to the Prophets and Psalmists, the case is somewhat altered. Here, for the most part, the anonymous character of the Historical books is exchanged for the avowed authorship of the Prophetic writers. Even in the lost Historical works, the names of the Prophets who composed them were for the most part known. And no one doubts that the Prophecies of Hosea, Joel, Amos, Micah, Obadiah, Nahum, Ezekiel, Haggai,¹ were written by the Prophets whose names they bear; or that a considerable portion of the Psalter of David and of the Prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah, were written by those whose names have been by long custom associated with them. But in these latter cases it has happened, by a confusion which has frequently attended ancient writings, in proportion to the eminence of their authors, and the complexity of their contents, that they have gradually embraced fragments of other writings, which, whether from a similarity of style or name or subject, have been regarded

¹ I have excepted "Malachi," only because of the doubt which exists as to the exact meaning of the title.

as akin to them. The most remarkable instance is the Psalter. As far back as the Christian era, this whole collection went under the name of "David." As such it is constantly quoted in the New Testament. As such it was received by the most illustrious of the Fathers, Augustine and Chrysostom. As such it is introduced into our own Prayer-book. This uniformity of authorship in the Psalms has now been generally abandoned. Not only are the most various authors and ages admitted by all scholars into this once exclusively Davidic dominion, but even the time-honored titles, which were long received as essential parts of the Canonical Scriptures, and which unquestionably represent the oldest tradition, are now generally treated as uncertain in date and unauthentic in substance.¹ The consequence has been an universal recognition of that wonderful variety of situation and character, which gives to the Psalter one of its chief outward charms.²

The same process of disintegration and restoration, with the same happy results, has been carried on with regard to the other books to which I have referred. The two most signal instances are Zechariah and Isaiah. In the case of Zechariah,³ a suspicion has long been awakened, that in company with the undoubted works of the Prophet of that name, who lived after the Captivity (Zech. i.—viii.), have been arranged Prophecies of an earlier date (ix.—xiv.), from the hand of one or more Prophets, whose works have been confounded with the writings of the later teacher. They were quoted by the Evangelist St. Matthew (xxvii. 9) under the name, not of Zechariah but of Jeremiah. In our own Church, this diversity of authorship has been drawn out at length by Mede, Hammond, and Archbishop Newcome; and in Germany, though there is still a division of opinion on the subject, the great preponderance of authority is in favor of the divided origin of the book. A similar result has been obtained, as we have seen, by a more careful study of the Prophecies of Isaiah.⁴ It has been urged that here the work of an unknown

¹ I ought to except the attempted vindication of the authenticity of the titles by the Bishop of Natal (*Pentateuch and Book of Joshua critically examined*, Part II.). But probably no other critical investigator

has ventured so far in defence of the traditional belief.

² See Lecture XXV.

³ See Lectures XXXV., XXXVII.

⁴ See Lecture XL., and Note A.

later Prophet, including the whole of the latter section of the book (xl.—lxvi.), has been bound up with the writings of the earlier Prophet of the times of Hezekiah. This opinion, though not dating back so far as that which advocates the variety of authorship in the Psalms and in Zechariah, has received a still more decided support from the chief Hebrew scholars of the Continent.

These attempts to discover the real authors of the books, which popular tradition has wrongly assigned to great names, are sometimes invidiously treated as attacks on the authority and genuineness of their writings.

It ought to be needless to say, that the *authority*, or *canonicity*, of a sacred book hardly ever depends on its particular date or name. If for these purposes it was necessary that the writers should be known, nearly half the books of the Old Testament would at once be excluded from the canon. And as the second portion of Zechariah cannot lose its authority from its being of an earlier date than has been commonly supposed, so neither can the fifth portion of the Psalter, or the second portion of Isaiah, lose their authority from being later than the reigns of David or Hezekiah. The discovery of diversity of authorship in the Prophecies of Isaiah has been termed “the undeifying of Isaiah.” But, even granting the “deification” of Isaiah to be in itself a desirable object, it cannot surely be attained by so accidental a circumstance as the mere outward arrangement of the writings which now bear his name; nor can any of these inspired Prophets be “undeified” or degraded from any glory which is their due by a mistake in their titles, still less by giving to each his proper place, and by adding, if so be, a new personage to that goodly fellowship, which assuredly gains rather than loses by the increase of its members, and by the better understanding of the time and occasion of its utterances.

So also the question of *genuineness*, properly speaking, can only arise in regard to a work which avowedly claims for itself a false author. The later portions of the Psalter and of Isaiah are, for the most part, as anonymous as the Books of Ruth or of Chronicles, or as the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is no forgery which is detected, but the oversight of some ancient Hebrew collector or Christian expositor, who has united in one roll the

writings of two different authors. In the Homeric controversy, no one would think of charging those who believe that the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" were the works of two poets, with a denial of the genuineness of either poem. It is much to be regretted, that in the critical controversies of theology there has been a temptation, on both sides, needlessly to impute reprehensible motives: as when, on the one hand, the innocent endeavors to detect the real authorship of disputed works have been branded as sinister attacks on their character; and, on the other hand, the Sacred writers themselves have been blamed for a confusion that has only taken place long after their deaths. The Psalms of the Captivity are not less genuine and authentic because they have been classed with the Psalms of David, nor the Prophecies of the older Zechariah because they have been classed with those of the younger, nor the Prophecies of the younger Isaiah because they have been classed with those of the older.

There is indeed another province of disputed authorship into which the question of genuineness and spuriousness more properly enters. It has been said that "to write any book under the name of another, and to give it out to be his, is, in any case, a forgery, dishonest in itself, and destructive of all trustworthiness." But even this remark needs much qualification. Though aimed against those who question the commonly received date of the Book of Daniel, it falls really with far greater force on the vast multitude of divines who question the Solomonian authorship of "the Wisdom of Solomon." That book repeatedly claims to be written by Solomon, was maintained to be so by many of the Fathers, and was by them honored as such with a veneration equal to that which they paid to Scripture. And yet, although this belief is now universally abandoned in all Protestant countries, "the Book of Wisdom" is still treated, at least by the Anglican and Lutheran Churches, with reverence and admiration, and its lofty strain of religious morality is not thought to be impugned by the recognition of the fictitious character of its author. But, in fact, neither in the case of the Book of Wisdom, or (if recent criticisms should prove correct) of the Book of Daniel or of Ecclesiastes, would such a censure

be just, because there is no proof that this assumption of a great name was anything more than part of the plan of the work ; and it would be, or, at least, if we had all the circumstances before us, it might be, as absurd to charge the writers of these Sacred Books with forgery, because they wrote in the names of Solomon or Daniel, as to apply the term to Cowper's verses on Alexander Selkirk, or Burns's address to the army at Bannockburn, because those poems were not written by Selkirk or Robert Bruce, in whose mouths they are placed.

In all these questions, the first and chief duty of the critic is to judge without respect of persons ; to deal the same measure to the Book of Isaiah that we deal to the Psalter, — to the Book of Daniel that we deal to the Book of Wisdom. The books of Scripture only suffer from being subjected to requirements which we have ceased to apply to the books of common literature. Biblical critics must be called to decide whether the 137th Psalm is of the age of David or of the Captivity ; whether the Book of Daniel should be ascribed to the age of the Captivity or of the Maccabees ; whether the Book of Wisdom was written at Jerusalem or at Alexandria. But, in the interests alike of truth and of charity, it is much to be desired, that Religion should not be staked on the issue ; and that those who submit their understandings to what seem to them the facts of the case should be allowed to do so without being exposed to the charge of wilful blindness or of impious presumption. “The Faith can receive no real injury except from its defenders.” “No book can be written in defence of the Bible like the Bible itself ;” and, therefore, whilst we know that the eternal and essential elements of Religion cannot be affected by any critical investigations, we shall eagerly welcome any light which can be thrown on the structure or the meaning of the Sacred Books, which have already gained so much from a closer study of their contents.

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